# VĀCASPATI MIŚRA
ON
# ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

BY

DR. S. S. HASURKAR

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# ON
# ADVAIT VEDĀNTA

BY

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## A NOTE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BIHAR

The Government of Bihar established the **Mithila Institute** of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning at Darbhanga in 1951 with the object, **Inter-alia**, to promote advanced studies and research in Sanskrit learning, to bring together the traditional Pandits with their profound learning and the modern scholars with their technique of research and investigations, to publish works of permanent value to scholars. This Institute is one of the five others planned by this Government as a token of their homage to the tradition of learning and scholarship for which ancient Bihar was noted. Apart from the Mithila Institute, three others have been established and have been doing useful work during the last three or four years—Nalanda Institute of Research and Post-Graduate Studies in Buddhist l earning and Pali at Nalanda, K. P. Jaisawal Research Institute at Patna, and the Bihar Rashtra Bhasha Parishad for research and advanced studies in Hindi at Patna. In the establishment of the Mithila Institute the State Government received a generous donation from the Maharajadhiraja of Darbhanga for construction of the building on a plot of land also donated by him.

2. As part of this programme of rehabilitating and re-orientating ancient learning and scholarship, the editing and publication of **Vācaspati Misra on Advaita Vedānta** by **Dr. S. S. Hasurkar** has been undertaken with the co-operation of scholars in Bihar and outside. The Government of Bihar hope to continue to sponsor such projects and trust that this humble service to the world of scholarship and learning would bear fruit in the fulness of time.

## A SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

### on the author of this study

Born on the 15th of Feb. 1924 as the eldest son of well-known Sanskrit scholar, Pandit Shripad Shastri Hasurkar, Principal, Govt. Sanskrit College, Indore, Madhya-Bhārat, the writer of the present thesis had the unique opportunity of imbibing the oriental learning from his very childhood. The writer availed himself fully of this opportunity, and by the time he appeared the High School Examination in 1941, he had passed the Kāvya Tīrtha Examination and a number of minor examinations in various subjects, conducted by Bengal Sanskrit Association, Culcutta. His education along the orthodox as well as modern lines went on uninterruptedly for a number of years and reached final stages when he appeared at and passed in 1st division the M. A. examination of Agra University in 1947, and the Sāhityācārya examination of Govt. Sanskrit College, Banaras in 1948. Having a natural aptitude for research and a strong liking for Indian philosophy, the writer joined the College of Indology, Hindu University, Banaras, and worked there for more than two years as a research student under the guidance of Dr. P. L. Vaidya, M.A.; D. Litt., Head of the Department of Sanskrit and Pali. In 1951, he was awarded the degree of Ph. D. of the Hindu University, and in the subsequent years was absorbed by Madhya-Pradesh Govt. in its Education Services. He is, at the time of the publication of his thesis, serving at the Institute of Languages and Research, Jabalpur, M. P.

## A SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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## PREFACE

This thesis is an attempt to arrive at an impartial and objective appreciation of Vācaspati Miśra's contribution to the school of the Advaita Vedānta. Gifted with multi-sided philosophical genius, Vācaspati Miśra enriched, as every student of ancient Indian philosophy knows, different schools of philosophical thought with a number of original contributions, at once remarkable. The present thesis aims at an objective and critical study of the Advaitic outlook, as enlarged and evolved by this illustrious philosopher, and tries to evaluate and assess the chief significance of his remarkable contribution to this principal school of Indian thought, which has been aptly characterized as the finest flower of Indian genius.

The very character of the aim the thesis puts before itself, enchains the work with certain limitations, logical and hence unavoidable. The thesis does not try to fathom the deep philosophical genius of Vācaspati Miśra in its entirety. It only tries to understand Vācaspati Miśra the advaitin, as revealed to us by his contribution of this specific school of thought. Thus, it is not Vācaspati, the philosopher, but it is Vācaspati, the Vedāntin, that the reader can legitimately hope to catch glimpses of here. Within the realm of Advaita Vedānta the contributions of our illustrious philosopher have been of varied character, significance and value. Considerations of space have obliged us to put ourselves within closer limitations, and focus our main attention to the principal ones among them. In other words, the thesis tries to arrive at an impartial evaluation of only those contributions of Vācaspati Miśra in the domain of the Advaita Vedānta, which are traditionally held as major, and can be rationally held as such. This does not mean, however, that the thesis completely ignores the points of minor light. With different facets of a philosophi-

cal outlook so closely inter-linked, an exhaustive study of a major contribution necessarily includes an appreciative view of the minor ones. The above statement, therefore, is recorded, only with a view to acquaint the reader of the thesis with the general trend of the study, nothing more, nothing less. The main contribution of Vācaspati Miśra, the advaitin, lies in the domain of the doctrine of Māyā. The orthodox tradition, which unanimously upholds him as the originator of the famous Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine, as well as the highly speculative Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda, justifies this in an unambiguous manner. And, the rational and impartial analysis of his entire advaitic outlook also supports the assertion. The objective of the thesis therefore resolves down into a study of Vācaspati's contribution to the doctrine of Māyā. In other words, what the thesis aims at is the dispassionate study of the traditional attribution of the two important doctrines, an impartial enquiry into its bonafides and an assessment of the truth, inherent in it.

A comprehensive study of a particular doctrinal contribution of a particular philosopher necessarily entails a systematic and thorough investigation of the conditions, preceeding and succeeding such a contribution. Without a detailed acquaintance with the ideological background, in response to which it makes its appearance, and an impartial assessment of the influence, which it casts over the later evolution, a given doctrinal contribution of a given philosopher cannot be said to have been grasped in its total significance. Much more so is the case with the problem our thesis is concerned with. Coming at a very crucial juncture in the centuries-old career of a great advaitic doctrine, and surcharged with dynamic potentialities, Vācaspati's contribution necessarily requires a close study of the different phases in the evolution of Māyā-vāda. Consequencially, the subject-contents of the thesis fall into three main divisions. The first concerns itself with the pre-Vācasptai career of the doctrine of Māyā. The second devotes itself to the doctrine of Māyā, as developed by Vācaspati Miśra. The third tries to pure the

post-Vācaspati career of the doctrine. The first part tries to furnish the ideological background, against which the philosopher worked ; while the last helps us to understand the influence he was capable of exercising over his successors. Before we proceed to have a brief structural survey of the thesis, the subject-matter whereof can be subdivided into three main portions, we would like to draw the reader's attention to a fact or two. Though all these portions concern themselves with the study of the evolution of the doctrine of Māyā, the close mutual inter-dependence, the philosophical doctrines are necessarily characterized with, has induced us to view, in brief, the main aspects of other advaitic doctrines also, and thus to interpret the Māyā doctrine in its both independent and relative aspects. Consequentially, the section dealing with the pre-Vācaspati evolution of the doctrine of Māyā also deals with the successive phases in the pre-Vācaspati evolution of advaitic thought in general, —of course in a general way. Likewise is the case with the last portion. Another important fact, the reader should note, is that the main object of the present thesis being neither a historical study of advaitic thought nor a comprehensive and full-fledged exposition of the doctrine of Māyā, but being an evaluation of Vācaspati Miśra's contiribution to this specific school of thought, only those aspects of advaitic thought in general, and the doctrine of Māyā in particular, have been touched and dwelt upon throughout the thesis, which have a bearing on the current problem.

The first chapter, restricting itself to the earliest epoch in the pre-Vācaspati career of the advaitic thought in general and the doctrine of Māyā in particular, deals with some important phases in the pre-Śaṅkara evolution of the advaitic thought with special reference to the doctrine of Māyā. Beginning with the hoary Upaniṣadic times and ending on the threshold of Śaṅkara's activity, this chapter opens with an objective study of the Upaniṣadic phase. Taking the major Upaniṣads as the basis, it tries to arrive at a fair appreciation of the philosophy, as revealed in this phase and seeks to assess the doctrine of Māyā

as implicit therein. The second phase, though not Vedāntic in character, is of indispensible value to our present study. The undeniable moulding influence, which the Buddhistic philosophy came to exercise upon the evolution of advaitic thought, specially the doctrine of Māyā, has compelled us to introduce this allien mode of thought into the very body of our thesis, otherwise advaitic in subject-matter, and devote considerable place to an objective appreciation of the philosophical tenets, advocated thereby, with special reference to the doctrine of Māyā. The third phase concerns itself with the post-Upaniṣadic and pre-system age in the evolution of Vedāntic thought. Taking up the Bhagavad-Gītā as the most representative work of this epic age, it tries to arrive at a proper appreciation of the Vadāntic tenets as evolved during this period,—special reference to the doctrine of Māyā being always maintained. The fourth sub-section of this chapter deals with the Sūtra phase in the evolution of the advaitic thought in general, and the doctrine of Māyā in particular, and tries to have a bird's-eye-view of the advaitic philosophy, as enunciated by the Sūtras, with special reference to the doctrine of Māyā. The fifth and the last among the phases in the pre-Śaṅkara evolution of the doctrine of Māyā is the one reflected in the Kārikās of Gauḍa-pāda. A close view of the thought-contents of the work with a special consideration for the doctrine of Māyā, helps us immensely in having a fairly accurate idea of the circumstances, prevailing immediately before the advent of Śaṅkara, whose contributions constitute the second major epoch in the pre-Vācaspati evolution of the Advaita Vedānta.

To the objective study of this second epoch is devoted the entire second chapter. Based on the authoritative works of Śaṅkarācārya, the second chapter tries to arrive at a fair and detailed appreciation of the advaitic outlook, evolved by the illustrious thinker, and pays a special attention to the doctrine of Māyā as developed by him out of the former tendencies, coming down from Upaniṣadic times.

The third epoch in the pre-Vācaspati career of the advaitic thought covers the period, post-Śaṅkara, yet pre-Vācaspati. Forming a sort of immediate background of Vācaspati's activity, this epoch is of vital importance to our purpose. Therefore, a separate chapter is devoted to an objective study of the philosophical conditions as obtained during this epoch, and no less than three distinct, important sub-currents of advaitic thought are detected and studied, both objectively and comparatively.

After such a detailed and exhaustive acquaintance with the chequered career of advaitic thought in the pre-Vācaspati times, comes the fourth chapter, which concerns itself with a comprehensive study of the philosophical outlook, as enunciated by Vācaspati Miśra himself. Taking his available works as basis, a general sketch of Vācaspati, the advaitin, is drawn vividly; a close view of the salient features of his advaitic outlook, is obtained in details ; his unique version of the doctrine of Māyā is subjected to a critical study ; his contributions are compared and evaluated in their historical setting and an impartial conclusion as regards the merits and the demetrits of Vācaspati Miśra's contribution is drawn.

Correct value of a doctrinal contribution is always indicated by the scope and the extent of the influence it comes to exercise upon the later evolution of the doctrine. Working up to this dictum, the chapter views in brief the post-Vācaspati developments in the advaitic current of thought. It begins with a brief note of the general characteristics of this culminating epoch in the evolution of advaitic thought, studies in details the doctrine of Māyā as developed and finalised by two most important advaitic schools, compares the stands maintained thereby, and strikes the balance. It examines in details Vācaspati's influence over one of these two warring schools, to wit, the school of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda ; and takes up a critical and dispassionate study of the traditional evolution of Vācaspati's contribution to the advaita philosophy in general, and the doctrine of Māyā in particular. It arrives at an indepen-

dent and impartial conclusion as regards the exact truth in the traditional attribution of two most important advaitic doctrines to Vācaspati Miśra : and ends on the lines of general appreciative remarks on the unique position of Vācaspati Miśra among the brilliant advaitins of all times and climes.

It is for the first time in the annals of Sanskritic studies that an exhaustive study of the advaitic outlook of Pt. Vācaspati Miśra has been undertaken and performed on the above lines. It is for the first time too that the traditional appreciation of Vācaspati Miśra, as the originator of two most important advaitic doctrines, viz. the Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine, and the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi view, is subjected to a close scrutiny and an impartial study ; and the validity thereof is determined on doctrinal grounds with due respect for historical considerations. The comprehensive study of the career of the doctrine of Māyā, in its pre-Vācaspati as well as post-Vācaspati phases of evolution, is also not without its interesting points. Though undertaken with a view to acquaint ourselves with the ideological back-ground against which our philosopher worked, as well as the influence he was capable of exercising over later authorities, this study, taken by itself, has several points of originality. We would like to draw reader's attention, for example, to the third and the fifth chapters. A detailed survey of the philosophical conditions obtaining during the post-Śaṅkara and pre-Vācaspati period is taken up for the first time ; and an objective sketch of the different tendencies that arose immediately after the great Śaṅkara is attempted on the grounds of textual evidence in the third chapter. In the fifth also, broad classification of post-Vācaspati advaitic thought into two divisions, a close study of their distinguishing facets, their detailed comparison, are equally new and original attempts in the Vedāntic studies. More remarkable are the attempts to trace out the evolutions of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine and the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi view in their successive phases and to determine Vācaspati Miśra's position among them. These are, however, only the major points, on which the thesis can claim originality

of conception and furtherence of the studies in the Advaita Vedānta.

The writer of the thesis had unique fortune of pursuing his researches under the valued guidance of Dr. P. L. Vaidya M.A., D.Litt, Mayurabhanja Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit and Pali, College of Indology, Banaras Hindu University. Under all the phases of its evolution, the thesis was happily a subject to his sympathetic guidance and considerate supervision. The writer of the thesis considers it his duty to convey his sincere thanks to his respected teacher for the invaluable help that he extended. He also deems it his happy privilege to convey the same to the Director of Mithila Institute of Research in Sanskrit Learning, Darbhanga, without whose active interest the publication of the thesis would have remained a remote possibility.

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## A LIST OF THE ABBREVIATION EMPLOYED

(1) A.V. : Advaita Vedānta.
(2) A.U.B. : Aitareya-Upaniṣad-Bhāṣyaṁ.
(3) A.U. : Aitareya-Upaniṣad.
(4) B. : Brahma-Sūtras.
(5) B.U. : Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad.
(6) B.G. : Bhagavad-Gītā.
(7) Bha. : Bhāmatī.
(8) B.S. : Brahma-Siddhi.
(9) B.U.B.V. : Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad-Bhāṣya-Vārtika.
(10) B.U.B. ; Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad-Bhāṣyaṁ.
(11) B.S.S.B. : Brahma-Sūtra-Śāṅkara-Bhāṣyaṁ.
(12) B.G.B. : Bhagavad-Gītā-Bhāṣyaṁ.
(13) Cha. U. : Chāndogya-Upaniṣad.
(14) Cha.U.B. : Chāndogya-Upaniṣad-Bhāṣyaṁ.
(15) D.S.Vada. : Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-Vāda.
(16) G.K. : Gauḍapādīya-Kārikā.
(17) G.K.B. : Gauḍapādīya-Kārikā-Bhāṣyaṁ.
(18) I.S. : Iṣṭa-Siddhi.
(19) I.U. : Iśāvāsya-Upaniṣad.
(20) I.U.B. : Iśāvāsya-Upaniṣad-Bhāṣyaṁ.
(21) Ka.U. : Kaṭha-Upaniṣad.
(22) Ka.U.B. : Kaṭha-Upaniṣad-Bhāṣyaṁ.
(23) K.U.B. : Kena-Upaniṣad-Bhāṣyaṁ.
(24) Ke. U. : Kena Upaniṣad.
(25) Ma.U. : Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad.
(26) Ma.U.B. : Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad-Bhāṣyaṁ.
(27) Mu.U. : Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad.
(28) Mu.U.B. : Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad-Bhāṣyaṁ.
(29) N.S. : Naiṣkarmya-Siddhi.
(30) P.P. : Pañca-Pādikā.
(31) P.D. : Pañca-Daśī.

(32) P.P.V. : Pañca-Pādikā-Vivaraṇa.
(33) P.U. : Praśna-Upaniṣad.
(34) P.U.B. : Praśna-Upaniṣad-Bhāṣyaṁ.
(35) R.V. : Ṛg-Veda.
(36) S.S. : Saṁkṣepa-Śārīraka.
(37) S.L.S. : Siddhānta-Leśa-Saṁgraha.
(38) S.D.S. : Sarva-Darśana-Saṁgraha.
(39) Sve.U. : Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad.
(40) S.F. : Samīkṣā-Fakkikā.
(41) S.D.Vada. : Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-Vāda.
(42) T.U. : Taittirīya-Upaniṣad.
(43) T.U.B. : Taittirīya-Upaniṣad-Bhāṣyaṁ.
(44) V.P.S. : Vivaraṇa-Prameya-Saṁgraha.
(45) V.S.M. : Vedānta-Siddhānta-Muktāvalī.
(46) V.S.M.T. : Vedānta-Siddhānta-Muktāvali-Ṭīkā.
(47) V.P. : Vedānta-Paribhāṣa.
(48) V.S. : Vedānta-Sāra.
(49) V.U. : Vivaraṇa-Upanyāsa.

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VĀCASPATI MIŚRA ON ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

## CHAPTER I

## PRE-ŚAṄKARA EVOLUTION OF VEDĀNTA

CLAIMING a hoary antiquity, the Upaniṣads reflect, inspite of the complex medley of divergent out-looks, the earliest phases in the pre-Śaṅkara evolution of Advaitic thought. Coming at the very dawn of philosophical speculation, they, however, present the monistic tendencies in a general way. The doctrines of a highly speculative value, doctrines, such as that of Māyā, are hardly distinct in their clear-cut form. This does not, however, mean that the Upaniṣadic philosophy is absolutely unconscious of such subtler doctrines; for, there is many a convincing indication in the Upaniṣadic texts which establishes beyond doubt the principal tenets of Advaita Vedānta (AV.). The doctrine of Māyā too has got its own foundation, however hidden and implied it may be, deep into the Upaniṣadic teachings.

The philosophy of the Upaniṣads is more concerned with the proper guidance of the seekers after truth than the mere doctrinal hair-splitting. The central point of the Upaniṣadic philosophy, mostly monistic, revolves round the essential truth of one's being, as well as the essentially real nature of the phenomenon of the universe, and tries to find the supreme reality, underlying both of them. Adopting a subjective method, it searches for the fundamental essence of the individual, and penetrating through various 'covers', arrives at a deep psychical principle, and terms it as Ātman[1], the Self. Adopting an objective method, analysing the outer world into its successive causes, it arrives at the principal cause of the universe, the Brahman, the Infinite, and achieves a culminating point of evolution of thought by identifying the inner reality with the outer reality, and thus realises the supreme principal of unity-in-diversity. This synthesis is the central pivot of the Upaniṣadic teaching

1. Vide : Ka. U. 1, 3, 10-11.

and every other topic of philosophical character is handled as of importance, subservient thereunto. Thus, while the Upaniṣadic seers elucidate various problems of philosophical character, they never forget to revert to the main burthen of their philosophy and stress the supreme necessity of realising the underlying reality, through the recognition whereof alone, the Ajñāna, the cause of misery, can be put to end, and Supreme Bliss attained.

The Ātman, variously called as Puruṣa, Brahman or Akṣara is characterised[1] as Changeless Existence, Pure Consciousness and Immortal Bliss. He is the eternal force, working behind all types of sense-perceptions and cognitions, but himself is never perceived, never cognised. Being himself the perceiver and the experiencer, he is never an object of perception or experience. Akṣara or immutable, the Ātman is eternally free from the attributes that beset the mortal universe and hence can be described through the negation of such attributes. He alone is above the Time and Change, everything else being subject to mortality and dissolution. The attributes like desire, hatred, pleasure, pain etc. are the characteristics of the Intelligence and are hence but superimposed on the Ātman, who is eternally free from them.[2] Essentially one and without second, he comes to be mistaken for many, the notion of diversity owing its rise to a variety of functions he performs. Sinless, ageless, deathless, untouched by sorrow, he is omni-potent and presente verywhere. Everything that is perceived is he himself[3], but he is not perceived as such.[4] Because, devoid of attributes, he, though the cause of the universe, is subtle, and is hence comprehended only by the wise as the self-luminous, second-less, transcendent reality, the ground of all names, forms and actions. It is through the superimposition of the function of Māyā, the pariṇāmi cause of the

1. T. U. 2, 1.
2. Vide : B. U. 1, 5, 3.
3. Cha. U. 7, 25, 2.
4. Cha. U. 6, 12, 2.

universe, that the Ātman appears as though endowed with activity. But though perceived in this manner, every moment, he remains unperceived in reality; for only those can perceive him, who, casting aside the superimposed dharmas, do not claim perception thereof. But the total negation of the attributes does not deny his existence. Because the entire universe owes its appearance as existent, entirely to the reflection of the eternal existence, thereof; and the joy, cognised but momentarily in the saṁsāra, which is full of pain, is but a fraction of the eternal joy of the Ātman.

This Ātman, the supreme reality, is, as the term itself implies, identical with the self of the seeker after truth.[1] The distinction between the individual soul and the universal soul, it being brought about through the super-position of the attributes of the adjuncts upon the Ātman, does not affect the fundamental character of the latter, who is one, without second. That the distinction between the Jivātman, Paramātman and Ātman is only apparent has been amply hinted at by the Upaniṣadic philosophers. Thus, the Jivātman has been clearly indentified with the self of the supreme being in the Chāndogya Upa.[2], and held as eternally identical with the Brahman, the ground of all.[3] Thus, fundamentally identical with the Brahman, the Jivātman is eternally free from pain and bondage. Therefore, the attainment of Brahmahood is nothing more than the realisation of one's own nature. Through it alone, the seeker, "identical with Brahman, becomes Brahman."[4]

The Jivātman and the Paramātman thus being essentially identical with each other, and both with the Ātman, the Upaniṣads strongly emphasise the necessity of adoption of monistic out-look, as the only one having its basis on facts. The notion of diversity is based on misapprehension and hence is only apparent. Had it been real, it would have been ever-

1. Vide : B. U. 2, 5, 19.
2. Cha. U. 6, 3, 2.
3. Cha. U. 8, 14, 1.
4. B. U. 4, 4, 6.

present in perception, and present even during the state of deep sleep; nor would it have been possible, even for the knower of ultimate truth, to achieve absolute freedom from fear, the source of fear, idea of duality, being ever present. For, had it been real, diversity would never have disappeared for good, even after the supreme realisation. Indeed, absolute cessation of diversity alone is bliss, and the notion of diversity, however sublime it may be, is the source of fear and unhappiness.[1] Unless one sees oneself among the all, and the all among oneself, one cannot transcend fear and jealousy, infatuation and sorrow. Absolute freedom from sorrow awaits those, on the other hand, who perceive that the supreme reality alone appears in diverse forms and names[2].

Having thus emphasised the fundamental unity of Jivātman, Parmātman, and Ātman, the Upaniṣads proceed to explain the relation between the Ātman and the Universe. Now and then, the universe is maintained to be the manifestation of the supreme being,[3] and is thus completely identified with the Brahman,[4] while, elsewhere the Ātman is sung of as the āyatana, or the mūla,[5] or the pratiṣṭhā of the entire saṁsāra. It is thus said that it is through the eternal existence of the Brahman that the universe, in all its aspects, appears as existent.[6] While in the Māṇḍu. Upa.,[7] the Ātman is said to be the cause out of which the universe emerges in the beginning of the creation, and into which, again, gets submerged at the end thereof. Thus, we can detect, in the Upaniṣads, both the theories, that came to be known later on as Brahma-pariṇāmavāda and Brahma-vivarta-vāda.

The problem of the creation of universe also receives a varied treatment at the hands of the Upaniṣadic philosophers. As

1. T. U. 2, 7.
2. A. U. 3,1 and Ka. U. 2, 2, 10.
3. Mu. U. 2, 1, 10 and 2, 2, 11.
4. Ma. U. 1, 2.
5. Cha. U. 6, 8, 4.
6. Mu. U. 3,2,1.
7. Ma. U. 1,6.

usual, a wide diversity of theories has been propounded as regards the original material, out of which the universe was created in the beginning. Thus, while in the T. U,[1] we hear of the emergence of 'sat' out of the 'asat', while we are told that before the creation of the universe, there was nothing what-so-ever present[2], we are assured elsewhere that the Ātman was existent before the creation.[3] Yet, an overwhelming majority of the Upaniṣadic seers sings of the creation of the cosmos as brought about by and out of the Brahman. Thus, in B. U. itself'[4] the creation of the universe in all its aspects, is attributed to Brahman by means of a spectacular driṣṭānta.[5] And, that even the statements, describing the emergence of the universe out of 'asat', might have a deeper meaning of the word—'asat' in view, has been hinted at, for example, in Cḥā. U.[6] where the stand of Śūnya-vādins is vividly exposed to be illogical. Other textual authorities too discard the theory of creation, favoured by the Asat-kāryavādins, and sing that out of the Brahman itself this universe, sentient and otherwise, emerges in the beginning of the creation, and in it again it submerges at the time of pralaya.[7] Sometimes, the creation is attributed to the volition of the omni-potent Ātman, i.e., the Ātman himself is stated to have become many through penance;[8] while, in other places, the Ātman is said to have distinguished the up-to-that-time undistinguished original matter, into different names and forms and thus created the cosmos.[9] The former theory seems to have been developed later on in the Brahma-pariṇāma-vāda, while the latter into the conception of Māyā, as the transformatory material cause of the universe. However divergent may be the views preached by the Upaniṣadic philo-

1. T. U. 2, 7.
2. Vide : B. U. 1, 2, 1.
3. B. U. 1, 4, 1; 1, 4, 17.
4. B. U. 1, 4, 10 and 11.
5. B. U. 2, 1, 20.
6. Chā. U. 6, 2, 1 and 2,
7. Mu. 2, 1, 1.
8. T. U. 2, 6.
9. Vide : B. U. 1, 4, 7.

sophers on the problems like cosmogony, all of them are unanimous on the questions, vital for the knowledge of reality. Same striking unanimity of opinion prevails as regards the nature of salvation and the means towards the attainment of it. Unanimous emphasis is laid on the realisation of the inner reality as identical with the external one as the only way towards the achievement of supreme beautitude. Self-disciplines, motivated by the desires of lesser order, or the contemplations, focussed on the parts of the All-in-all, are clearly condemned as bringing forth but temporary fruits;[1] and the realisation of Brahman alone is praised as the only means to achieve limitless joy. This achievement is however not an achievement of something new. Nothing new is achieved by the sādhaka, after the realisation of the Brahman. Eternally identical with Brahman, yet labouring under the misapprehension of himself being totally different therefrom, the seeker realises his fundamental unity with Brahman and is described as having achieved liberation.

From this brief survey of the teachings of the earliest Upaniṣads, a fact stands out clearly: and it is the practical spirit, pulsating beneath the surface of the curious intermixture of hetrogeneous matter. More concerned with the exposition of the transcendental reality and the elucidation of the means, leading towards the realisation thereof, the Upaniṣadic philosophers hardly indulge into deep logical argumentation, necessarily required by subtle doctrines like Māyā. In other words, what we find in the Upaniṣadic philosophy is the fundamental doctrines, which were later on enlarged and systematised by the minds, given to synthesis and analysis, into elaborate Vedānta systems. Naturally, all that one can ever hope to find in this earliest phase of Advaita Vedānta is the raw material out of which was built up later on the doctrine of Māyā. It is extremely on rare occasions that one comes across the word Māyā, and that too, generally, not employed in its strictly philosophical implication.

1. Mu. U. 1, 2, 7,

In Bṛhadāraṇyaka, however,[1] the word, Māyā, seems to have been used in a sense a bit akin to the one attached to it later on. As regards famous mantra "Māyām tu prakritṁ vidyāt, Māyinam tu Maheśvaram,[2]" it seems to belong to a later period of Upaniṣadic literature; and therefore can hardly be taken as a proof, pointing to the existence of the doctrine in the earlier Upaniṣads. The conception of Avidyā, seems however to be present. More frequent in occurrence, the word Avidyā is employed to denote ignorance or misconception of reality.[3] What came to be known as the "sūkṣma śarīra" later on, is perhaps what is meant by the word "avidyā-granthi" in Muṇḍaka Upa.[4] A laudatory verse in Kaṭha[5] distinguishes between the Vidyā and the Avidyā; while in Īśa. Upa.[6] the followers of Avidyā are said to be doomed to fathomless darkness. The word, anṛta, also has been used, but less frequently. The being, it is said in Chān. Upa.,[7] though transcending to his own real nature of existence, knowledge and Bliss, does not realise this during the state of deep sleep, being influenced by "anṛta". The words 'sat' and 'asat', which are of common use,[8] are also used in a variety of meanings, differing in each and every context. Thus, though most of the specific terms, denoting the doctrine of māyā that come to be employed so widely later on, can be found prevalent as early as the Upaniṣadic period, one can be hardly justified in attributing to them the clear cut shades of meaning and subtle implications that came to be associated with them with the growth of the Vedāntic thought.

Now, let us see how far is the Māyā-vāda, the most distinguishing doctrine of the AV. school of thought, implied in the elementary and fundamental principles, voiced by the Upaniṣadic philosophers.

1. B. U. 2, 5, 19.
2. Sve. U. 4, 10.
3. Mu. U. 1, 2, 8 and 9.
4. 2, 1, 10.
5. 1, 2, 4-7.
6. 9.
7. Vide : 8, 3, 2.
8. T. U. 2, 6-7.

From the foregoing brief sketch of the essential characteristics of the Brahman, the transcendental reality, now and then identified with the Ātman of the seeker, the Vedic seers seem to be fully convinced that the conceptions of the Ātman, as either active, or endowed with finite dimension, or characterised by the attributes, are utterly founded on ignorance. Being infinite in dimension, the Ātman, they held, can, never be endowed with action, and the changes like birth, growth, decay and death, are but superimposed on him, and hence affect his real nature but little. The notion of the Ātman, in the same way, as being perceptible by senses, which was widely entertained, is also based on a likewise misconception, because being the perceiver, he himself can never be perceived. This entire universe of multifarious name, form and activity is dependent upon the Ātman for its very existence, and in this manner the statements, describing that the Ātman has assumed so many forms, has become so many in accordance with the functions he performs, can be best explained. Had the Upaniṣadic philosophers been of the opinion that the universe has an independent existence of its own, they would not have described this phenomenon as a passing phase of the external Brahman,[1] or described it as owing its rise and existence to the Ever-Existent. That the appearance of existence, wherewith this phenomenon baffles the thinker, is nothing but the reflection of the Brahman, has been amply hinted at.

Indeed, though sometimes condescending to the level of vyavahāra, and describing the creation of the universe out of and by the Ātman, the insight of the Upaniṣadic philosohers never falters to identify this entire phenomenon with its fundamental supreme reality, the Brahman; or to refuse to take into account the diversity, because it is only superficial[2]; or to remind thes eeker that the ground of appearance alone is beyond the clutches of Time; or to utter an unmistakable warning that those, who fail to realise this, can never find the final beautitude.

1. Vide : B. U. 2, 3, 1.
2. Mu. U. 2, 2, 11.

And, just like the conception of duality, the notion of the diversity of souls, maintained and justified by the thinkers of lesser insight, is also based on the imperfect assessment of reality, assert the Upaniṣadic philosophers. Hence they have completely indentified the Jivātman with the Ātman[1] and both with the Brahman, the transcendental reality, while the dualistic view of life, the notion of the diversity of the individual souls, receives a strong censure, as misleading the seeker in his search after Truth.[2] The diversity, the essence of the saṁsāra, is only apparent. And this is actually experienced by every being during the state of dẹep sleep. That nothing but the Self is perceived during the suṣupti by the senses or mind or Intelligence is due to, not the decay or the loss of the powers of the knower, the self, but to the total absence of everything, different from his own self,—a fact, the logical elucidation whereof leads only to the really non-existent nature of the universe. For, a thing, once existent, remains existent for all the times to come; nor a thing, once non-existent, can ever become existent. Hence, the fact that the diversity is non-existent during the state of deep sleep, irresistably leads one to accept its appearance during the states of jāgrat and svapna, as only apparent and hence māyika. That can be the only reason for the use of the word "iva", so subtly employed in the concluding passage of the 4th Brāhmaṇa of the Bṛha. Upa. The various passages that declare the identity of the phenomenon of the universe and the supreme reality, the Brahman, also do not propound the identity of the two entities, having their own independent existence; because it is simply absurd to maintain that the saṁsāra, with all its painful, ever-changing, non-sentient character can be really identical with the blissful, changeless, and sentient Brahman. All that such passages signify is that this phenomenon of cosmos, a mere appearance, is existent through the existence of the Brahman, the ground thereof; and is, for this very reason, nothing but the latter, misconceived and misapprehended. Hence, all such

1. Chā. U. 6, 3, 2.
2. Ka. U. 2, 1, 10 and 11.

passages, that point to the ground of the appearance and identify the latter with the former, can be reasonably taken as the sources of the Māyā-Vāda.

The phenomenon of the universe thus being only an appearance, the different theories, put forward by the Upaniṣadic philosophers as regards the problem of cosmogony, can be accounted for, only as being in accordance with the adhyāropāpavāda method of elucidation of the supreme truth. For, as nothing can be destroyed, or created, to say that the universe was created by the Bṛahman is illogical. In the passage of the Taitt. Upa. (2,7), that sings of the evolution of the sat out of asat, the ever-existing supreme reality, the ground of appearance, itself, seems to be denoted by the word asat, since it is non-existing, before the appearance of the apparently real saṁsāra, in the form of the latter. Otherwise to take the two words in their common meaning and to propound the emergence of the universe, existent by nature, out of blank void, is to accuse the contemplative Upaniṣadic philosophers of an uncommonly gross error of judgement. The creation by volition, attributed to Sat or the Ātman, the Brahman or the Puruṣa, also can be accounted for, as only the act of giving rise to the semblance of diversity against the ground of eternal unity, and nothing more. For, just as the existent can never become non-existent, or the non-existent the existent, the one also can never become the many. Nor is it possible to conceive of anything like action in the infinite, changeless Brahman, and without anything like action, there is no possibility of one becoming many or of the universe, emerging out of the pre-existent Brahman.

The saṁsāra itself being thus nothing but an appearance, the bondage and the liberation also have got but a relative reality. This, however, is openly stated in a few places. Though always anxious to impress upon the mind of the seeker that his Self, which is eternally identical with the transcedental reality, the Brahman, is ever free from the blemishes of the saṁsāra, which he himself has superimposed upon his own self through ignorance, the Upaniṣadic seers are equally anxious to utter a

word of warning lest the seeker might abandon his sādhanā, deriving consolation from the dangerously subtle truth of the illusory character of the painful saṁsāra, and lay down that the immediate realisation of the Self alone can enlighten one on the ultimate reality. That is the reason why the Upaniṣadic philosophers, inspite of their veiled hints at the illusory character of saṁsāra, hasten to prescribe various complex methods of contemplation, warn the Sādhaka against the possible pitfalls, describe in details how the Brahma-jñāna dawns upon the seeker, how it dispels the influence of the Avidyā, and how the supreme beautitude is attained.

Thus, on a synthetical study of the doctrines, stated in the Upaniṣads, with a view to ascertain the scope and extent to which the Māyā-vāda, the most characteristic doctrine of the Vedāntic school, can be found therein, one can safely say that though representing the earliest stage in the gradual evolution of ancient Indian philosophical thought, the philosophy of the Upaniṣads does not reveal that clear-cut treatment of theme, clarity of conception, refinement of logical argumentation, which characterise the philosophical literature of later times; yet, in spite of curious intermixture of heterogeneous matter, it has an unmistakable inclination towards the principal tenets of what came to be known later on as AV. school of thought. In other words, to a mind, given to synthesis, the Upaniṣadic philosophy seems to be the opening phase of AV. thought. Of the AV. doctrines also, the most basic ones alone have found clear expression in the Upaniṣadic philosophy. The subtler doctrines like that of māyā, which presuppose a considerable development of philosophical thought, are hardly found in such an early phase. The specific terms, which came to be associated with the said doctrine later on, are to be found here too, but not yet in the shades of meaning subtly distinguished from each other. In spite of all this, a synthetical study of the AV. doctrines, as stated in the Upaniṣads, reveals, however vaguely it might be, the first glimpses of the great Māyā-vāda. A bit deeper thought over the views, expressed by the Vedic seers as regards the problems of the ultimate reality

the individual soul and the supreme one, the bondage and the liberation therefrom, the universe and its relation with the knower thereof, leads one irresistibly towards the beginnings of the Māyā-vāda, and thus supports him in his stand that even in the earliest phase of the ancient Indian philosophy, faint glimpses of the subtle doctrine of Māyā. ean be found

For the next phase in the evolution of the pre-Śankara Māyā-vāda, which we have read in the Upaniṣadic literature, as implicit, we will have to turn to the philosophical activities, which went on in the post-Upaniṣadic non-priestly circles and finally found an impressive expression, highly speculative and complex, in the form of four great Buddhistic systems. Of such a vital importance are these four great schools of Buddhist philosophy, that any attempt to trace out a systematic evolution of a particular doctrine through different stages would remain incomplete, without a proper attention paid to the influence, cast on it, by them. The study of the influence, cast by the Buddhist philosophy, on the development of the doctrine of Māyā, is all the more essential; because it would enable us to ascertain how far the doctrine evolved out of its rudimentary phase, detected in the Upaniṣadic stage, during the flourish of the Buddhist Philosophy, and how much does great Śaṅkara owe to his equally great antogonists, the Mādhyamikas, for his masterly elucidation of the refined Māyā-vāda.

Nearest to the Upaniṣadic age, and the earliest among the five stages in the evolution of the Buddhist philosophy, the Thera-vāda, it being directly based on the unsophisticated teachings of the Buddha, is pragmatic. The motive behind its enquiries is the intense desire to effect an escape from the misery, which is known as saṁsāra. Hence, avoiding all theoretical hair-splitting, it is at once positivistic, and does not proceed beyond the sphere of perception and reason.

According to it, the sensations and the thoughts, together with the physical frame, with which they are associated, are themselves the self. The Self is nothing but an aggregate of the physical and the psychical elements, such as self-consciousness, feeling,

perception, and mental disposition. Material things also are nothing but aggregates, with no under-lying unity whatsoever. For, the attributes are themselves the object of perception, and the idea of a self-sustaining substance, existing apart from them, is a mere superstition. Therefore, both soul and matter exist as complexes and neither is a single self-contained entity. Thus, the material world with all its objects, the senses and the physical bodies are the aggregates, derived from the rudimentary elements, all of them as unsubstantial as the things, derived therefrom; and the skandhas, the aggregate whereof is mistaken for one non-changing Ātman, are derived from the rudimentary Citta. Constantly changing, everything is a succession of similar things, and the notion of fixity, either of the soul or of the worldly things, is purely fictitious. Thus, neither Being nor Non-being, but Becoming is the supreme truth. There being an incessent change, the world is a process. But there is nothing as "subject" to the process. The process itself is the thing. The law, working behind the incessant production of the series of similar states, is Necessity. The necessity to produce the effect is not however inherent in the cause alone, but is also the result of certain external factors, co-operating therewith. Thus, though the law of necessity, governing the continuous succession of a similar series, is beyond exception, its operation is dependent upon conditions; and it is called as the Law of Dependent Origination or "Pratītya-samutpāda." Thus according to the Thera-vādins, once the causes, sustaining the effect are sundered, the series is arrested; and since the misery of existence is caused in accordance with a natural and universal law, it can be put to an absolute end through removing its cause, to wit, Avidyā. For in spite of its being one of the dozen links of the Bhavacakra consisting of Avijjā, Saṁskā ra, Vijñāna, Nāma-rūpa etc., ever-revolving and inter-dependent in origination, the origin of suffering can be traced back to Ignorance alone. And Ignorance is the belief in the permanence of soul or worldly things. For everything being a flux, all recognition is based on misconceived identity. Out of this failure to detect the momentariness, as the very essence of being, springs up a desire for worldly things,

unsubstantial, or a more powerful craving for the preservation of the self. This Avijjā is of the four Ārya-Satyas, those concerning suffering, its origin, its removal and the way to remove it. Once the nature of suffering is ascertained, the origin thereof, i.e., Avijjā is detected and the way leading to the removal thereof is comprehended aright, with the help of the teachings of the Buddha, say the Thera-vādins, one, who has courage to follow the eight-fold path of self-discipline, snaps the ever-revolving chain of Bhavacakra, by the removal of one of its vital links, Avijjā, and attains Nirvāna, with the beginningless procession of the five-fold aggregates, disappearing for good.

Out of these Thera-vāda doctrines, highly endowed with rich potentialities, there emerged the great Buddhist philosophical systems, which exerted great influence upon the later Hindu thought. These are known as Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Yogācāra and Mādhyamika. The first two are earlier in rise, belong to the Hīnayana division of Buddhist faith, and are realistic in out-look, the latter two are somewhat late, belong to the Mahāyana division and are idealistic, their subjectivism finding supreme culmination in the famous Śūnya-vada of the Mādhyamika school.

Reflecting the first stage in the evolution of the Thera-vāda realism into the idealism of the Mādhyamika, the stand of the Vaibhāṣika school can be best explained as "pluralistic realism". More loyal to the doctrines, expressed in the Thera-vāda, though motivated by the spirit of the metaphysical enquiry, the Vaibhāṣika, in his attempts to find out the implications of the Master's preachings, has refrained from arriving at the logical, yet extreme, conclusions, violent to the precepts themselves. His view of the world therefore has its basis in realism, however far from naive it may be. His world-conception may be described as atomistic. For, according to him, the ultimate elements of reality are the atoms, unanalysable, invisible, inaudible, untastable yet not permanent but like "the momentary flashes into Being." Constituted of these are the sva-lakṣaṇas. And these fleeting sva-lakṣaṇas, infinite in number, are the only basis of the external world. All of them are diverse and have no principle of unity,

underlying them. Hence, they are called as 'things in themselves'. Each sva-lakṣaṇa is produced by the preceding one in its series and gives rise, in its turn, to the succeeding one in the same series. But otherwise all of them are absolutely relationless. Apprehended directly by the senses, they form the material of bare sensations. Whenever they are perceived, they are invariably accompanied by the categories of thought, which are described as generality, quality, action, name and substance. Every sva-lakṣaṇa, to put it plainly, appears through the medium of these conceptual elements. It never appears as a mere sva-lakṣaṇa but as a thing, belonging to a class, or bearing and so on. Thus, though a mere sva-lakṣaṇa is presented to senses, perception includes much more than that; and these extra additions are not material attributes, but only mental forms, which are superimposed on the sva-lakṣaṇa at each and every perception. But though thus purely imaginary, these kalpanās are of vital importance to the practical day-to-day activities. As regards the inner world of mind, as propounded by Vaibhāṣika, the five skandhas, together, stand for the personality. Of them, the place of the Vijñāna-skandha, known as Citta, corresponds to that of Bhūta; while that of the other four to that of the Bhautikas. The Vijñāna-skandha, which is of the character of an incessant succession of momentary ideas, is thus held as fundamental; and the other psychical features, such as feeling, perception, mental disposition etc., are considered to be the modifications.

Holding that the objects are really existent, and are known directly, the Vaibhāṣika is more faithful to the views, expressed by the Thera-vādins, than his other co-religionist thinkers. To the Vaibhāṣika, everything that is perceived is not true at its face-value. All perceptual judgements, wherein the distinction between the substance and the attribute is found, are, according to him, wrong. Every perception, which is "savikalpaka", is erroneous; it contains, however, a core of truth, known as sva-lakṣaṇa. But that sva-lakṣaṇa, the bare unrelated particular, is invariably taken in an earlier stage of perception, known as "nirvikalpaka". Therefore, the common perceptual

judgment, where the sva-lakṣaṇa undergoes a subjective elaboration can be said to be true, only so far as the sva-lakṣaṇa is concerned; but everything else, the sāmānya-lakṣaṇas, which are associated with the sva-lakṣana, cannot be said as real. The sāmānya-lakṣaṇa, such as the generality of cowness, it is pointed out, is as unrelated to the sva-lakṣaṇa of the cow, the thing, as the name "cow" with which one refers to it. Therefore, every subjective determination, it may be a jāti, or a guṇa, a karma, a nāma, or a dravya, which is superposed on the sva-lakṣaṇa, the only reality, taken in during the indeterminate stage of perception, is nothing but a mental form. Hence, though the Vaibhāṣika, still faithful to the Thera-vāda doctrines, can be reasonably held as realistic, yet he undoutedly effects an improvement upon the realism of the earlier Bhuddhist philosophers, in as much as, while pointing to the reality of the object in the form of its sva-lakṣaṇa, directly perceptible in the nirvikalpaka stage of perception, he definitely maintains the idealistic character of the conceptual elements, which are perceived in the savikalpaka, and are indispensible for the worldly activities.

The Sautrāntika differs from the Vaibhasika in only one important respect, by proceeding one step away from and nearer to the realism of Thera-vādin and the idealism of the Vijñāna-vādin. In stead of dogmatically asserting the existence of the sva lakṣaṇas, like Vaibhāṣika, he simply admits them as a hypothesis to account for the experience. An object cannot be present at the time it is perceived, he asserts. If it does so, it lasts for two moments, the first, when it serves as a stimulus of perception,, and the second when it is actually perceived. And this, the Sautrāntika points out, is against the inviolable doctrine of momentariness. Therefore, it is only the past thing which is actually perceived; so, what is present externally at the time of perception, can be nothing better than the successor of the member in the object-series,—the member, responsible as the stimulus of a perception. The particular member of the given object-series, which had served as the cause of perception, leaves its impression on the precipient mind; and it is from this impression that the existence

of that particular member (which is no more at the time of perception) is inferred. Therefore, though what is perceived actually exists, it is not apprehended when it exists. The existence of the object is never directly perceived, but inferred. It is not the object which we directly know, but rather a representation thereof, through which we indirectly come to know of it. This subtle way of accounting for the fact of perception in harmony with the doctrines of momentariness is an indisputable advance over the doctrine of Vaibhāṣika, who took for granted that an object as perceived is absolutely contemporaneous with the act of perception. But the implications of this stand of the Sautrāntika, the Bāhyārthānumeya-vādin, are much more important; because by propounding that every object, which is commonly thought of as actually perceived, is, in reality, not perceived but inferred as having had a prior existence, he has postulated the doctrine of "representative idea"; he has also postulated the external world as a mere hypothesis. He thus improves upon the view of the Vaibhāṣika, shifts the objective realism a step nearer to the subjective idealism of the Yogācāra, and thus represents an intermediary stage in the gradual evolution of the subtle Śūnya-vāda out of Thera-vāda realism.

A yet more drastic improvement in the fields of epistemology and ontology is effected by the Yogācāra. Of an origin later than those of the Sarvāstivadins, and further removed from the canonical doctrines, the school of the Vijñānavādins, highly idealistic, flatly refuses the reality of the external world and maintains it to be a delusion. While to the Sarvāstivādins, knowledge of the external object is true so far as the svalakṣaṇa thereof is concerned, and is false, only in respect of the conceptual elements invariably involved therein. To the Vijñānavādin, the knowledge alone is real, and its whole content is false. Out of the Tripuṭī of Jñātā, Jñāna and Jñeya, the Jñāna alone is true. Neither the subject, nor the object, but the incessant succession of momentary Vijñānas alone is the reality. The stimulus, responsible for the innumerable forms which an ever-changing succession of the Vijñānas assumes, is an internal

element, to wit, the vāsanā, and not any external one, because there is none. And this vāsanā, the stimulus, is left behind by past experience, which in its turn is to be traced back to another impression, that to another experience, and so on in an anādi series of impressions and experiences. At no particular stage in this santati, the experience is due to an external factor.

In justification of this idealistic stand, the Yogācāra works on the analogy of the dream, where experience arises without corresponding external object, and internal thoughts appear as external objects. He points out that the mere experience cannot be the indisputable criterion in deciding in favour of the independent existence of the external world. Again, he argues, if the Vijñāna is svayaṁ-prakāśa, there being no illuminator thereof (and that this is so is accepted by all Bhuddhist thinkers), why should not all experiences be of the same nature ? Just as in the case of the ālaya-vijñāna, the tripuṭī of jñātā, jñāna and jñeya is one and the same, the jñāna itself appearing as the jñātā and jñeya, in the case of the ordinary cognition also the tripuṭī is identical with each other. All knowledge is thus self-knowledge, and the distinction, commonly felt between jñāna as internal and identical with jñātā on the one hand, and its contents, as something external, owing their rise to an external independent object, on the other, is a delusion. Since thoughts and the things always present themselves together, it is quite needless and baseless to assume that they have their own independent existence. They should, therefore, be better viewed as different phases of one and the same factor, i.e., an incessant chain of momentary vijñānas. Had the object been real and with an existence independent of the experiences thereof, it would not have impressed different persons differently at one time, and even the same person at different times. The fact that it does so, establishes that what is given as the object, has no existence of its own, but is merely a particular form of vijñāna, mistakenly conceived of as external and mutually different therefrom.

The external world, in other words, whose independent existence was a matter of fact actually perceived according to Vaibhāṣika, and a matter of hypothesis, according to Sautrāntika,

is abolished outright by the Yogācāra by assuming that it is nothing but the respective ideas, generated by the mind, i.e., the incessant chain of momentary vijñānas, misconceived as external. Thus, taking its stand on extreme subjectivism, admitting the incessant procession of momentary vijñānas as the only reality, holding the division of jñātā, jñāna, and jñeya as superficial, the Yogācāra effects a drastic improvement over the epistemological and ontological doctrines, maintained by the former two, and by advocating the Bāhyārtha-śūnya-vāda, paves the way for the Sarva-śūnya-vāda of the Mādhyamikas, the most subtle culmination of the logical argumentation, rivalled only by the ajāti-vāda of the Advaita Vedāntins. Following the method of the idealist in exploding the reality of the external world and pushing it to its logical end, the nihilist, refuses the taken-for-granted reality of the subject-series too, and thus advocates the doctrine of Śūnyaṁ. If one is justified, says he, in refusing the extra-mental existence of the external world on the ground of dream-experience, one is reasonably justified in denying the real existence of the internal world also, taking for the basis of argument the complete negation of any kind of experience during the state of suṣupti; again, vijñāna and its objects, both being but the groups of passing phenomenon, the idealist cannot endow one with reality and deny it to the other, because if the jñeya is nothing but an appearance, the jñāna also turns out to be the same, for both are interdependent. Non-existence of the object of knowledge necessarily results in the non-existence of the knowledge; for without knowledge there cannot be any object thereof; without the latter, the existence of the former too is equally impossible. And, when both knowledge and its object, the world, internal as well as external, are but appearances, what remains there ? Nothing. So, this Nothing, this void, this Śūnyaṁ is the ultimate reality, propounds the Mādhyamika.

The ultimate inexplicability of all series, subjective and objective, also, drives one to accept Śūnyaṁ as their real character. For, they, interdependent that they are, cannot be

explained by their individual specific characteristics and therefore their explanation in terms of others too is impossible. Apparently springing out of non-existence, and returning to it again, after one moment of assumed existence, they have not any positive essence of their own, whereby they can be explained. And, what cannot be explained as such, there is no reason to believe them as existent, argues the Mādhyamika.

The very character of the external and internal world, aptly described as an incessantly evolving process, points to its phenomenal existence. For, had the world been really existent, it would not have been a subject to the process. The constant change in the world is possible, only if it is in the state of constant becoming. And yet, to accept an incessant change and a process of becoming as the character of the world, is to accept essencelessness as the essence thereof. For, however defended, the law of origination, commonly accepted as working behind this process, turns out to be nothing but a vague assumption. The very idea of origination itself is illogical. For a thing cannot originate by itself; being non-existent before its origination, it cannot be the cause of its origination. It can neither be originated by others; simply because there can be no sort of connection between the cause which is and the effect, which is to be. Either of these alternatives being impossible, the thing cannot be held as orginated by the combination of both of them. Nor can it be said to have originated without any cause, because in that case, all things would come into being at all times. All these possible ways of origination thus turning out to be impossible, the doctrine of origination, commonly acclaimed as governing the process of becoming (which is called as world) turns out to be nothing but an assumption of the ignorant, concludes the Mādhyamika.

Viewed from another point of view also, the illusory character of the world becomes crystal-clear. Had it been real, it would have been changeless. To say that it is real and at the same time ever-changing is illogical. Had it been changeless, it would never have been subject to the notion of past, present and future. That it is so, none can honestly deny; that means that it

is different from being ever-existent, either purely non-existent or existent-cum-non-existent. It being impossible to conceive of two opposites having one and the same substratum, the second alternative is impossible. But an objection might be raised, that the first alternative is also impossible, in face of the fact of world being actually perceived. Well, even during one's daily activities, one comes across many a thing, which, though really non-existent, appears as existent for a while, but resolves into its real character on proper investigation. But none considers them as having had a real existence. Same is the case with the phenomenon of the universe too. Its existence also is but apparent, and hence cannot change its fundamental character of niḥ-svabhāvatva.

The entire world, internal as well as external, being thus an illusion without any intrinsic truth of its own, there are, in reality, no process and no cessation, no bondage and no liberation. Everything such as Vedanā, Saṁjñā and Saṁskāra is but 'Māyā'. All the skandhas, dhātus and the āyatanas are nothing but void. And the realisation of the ultimate truth that there is no eternity but absolute Śūnyaṁ, leading to the absolute cessation of all appearance of existence is the true 'prajñā-pāramitā'. This world owes its appearance as existent to the beginningless illusory root-ideas of Citta. It therefore is but illusory. It has yet got a phenomenal existence, which vanishes into nothingness, as soon as the fundamental truth of essencelessness of all things, including the self, is grasped. It is having descended to this vyāvahārika sphere of reality, that the Buddha, while fully conscious of the illusory character of every thing, including himself and his teachings, propounded the law of Pratītya-samutpāda, explained the Bhavacakra, and explained the momentariness of everything. On that the Śūnya-vādins enter upon philosophical discussions, and establish the validity of the nihilistic doctrines. From the pāramārthika stand-point, however, (which is no stand-point, by the way, paramārtha being voidness of all, including voidness itself), there is no world-process, not even Avijjā, enunciated as the cause of saṁsāra, no

effects thereof, no ultimate truth to be grasped, no Sarvāstivādins to be refuted, no nihilistic doctrines to be established, no existence, no non-existence of the saṁsāra to be criticised or propounded, nothing but void, concludes the Mādhyamika.

Having thus viewed, in brief, the original doctrines that the Buddha preached, traced their gradual development in the form of four great systems, studied the principal tenets of each of these schools of thought, and followed a gradual evolution of thought, finding a culmination in the Śūnya-vāda of the Mādhyamika, we are in a position to trace the development of the doctrine of Māyā in the Buddhistic circles of thought.

No unambiguous trace of this subtle doctrine can be had in the earlier phases of the Buddhist philosophy. Positivistic by character, the philosophy of the Thera-vādins does hardly indulge into the deep ontological speculations, quite necessary for the exposition of a doctrine like that of illusion. It is true that the Buddha, in quest after the cause of sorrow, did work out a chain of causes, and finally traced all misery to Avidyā. That the Avidyā is the most vital link of the Bhava-cakra, cannot be denied. Yet, to read in the Budhistic doctrine of Avijjā, the Upaniṣadic conception of Avidyā, would mean an unwarranted assumption. For, though all evil is traced back to Avidyā, and escape is preached to lie through right knowledge by Buddha also, the line of similarity between the Upaniṣadic and the Buddhistic conceptions of Avidyā stopping at the very beginning. For, in the Upaniṣad the word implies the cosmic power, whereby the transcendental Brahman shows itself as the empirical world. On the Buddhistic side, however, the word is meant to signify the ignorance as the ground of individual existence. Hence, the first place is assigned to it in the chain of causation. And, even when the word Avidyā is used to denote ignorance in the Upaniṣads, the ignorance is about the essential unity of all existence, about the Ātman—the ground of all. It is sometimes contrasted with Vidyā or the knowledge about the Self, one and without second. But to the Thera-vādins, the ignorance, the prime meaning of the word Avidyā, is the

ignorance about sorrow, about the way it originates, about the nature of the extinction of sorrow, and about the means of bringing about the extinction. According to them, it consists of the failure of the individual being to recognize the momentary and essenceless character of the worldly things, and also the hollowness of the so-called Self. Beginningless, it determines, say the Thera-vādins, the elements, which bring about the cycle of existence, and is itself determined by certain others. For, it is from this four-fold Avijjā that there proceeds desire, desire leads to activity, activity brings in its turn rebirth with its fresh desires. And thus the vicious circle of the Saṁsāra is kept going on.

Like the Thera-vāda, the earliest phase of the Buddhist philosophy, the Sarvāsti-vāda of the Vaibhāṣika variety also hardly reflects any recognizable traces of the doctrine of Māyā. The stand of pluralistic realism, wherefrom the problems of life, internal as well as external, are handled, leaves no scope for such a doctrine, essentially subjectivistic; and for this very reason, one fails to trace any particular views, as maintained by the representationists of the Sautrāntika school also, on the problem. However different their views might be as regards the way in which the external world is perceived, both of them are of one opinion and view as regards its extra-mental existence.

It is in the purely idealistic doctrines of the Yogācāra, aptly described as Vijñāna-vādin, that one comes to note the first glimmerings of the Māyā-vāda; with a daring dash of logic, the external world in all its multifarious phases, held as absolutely real by the presentationists, and hypothetically real by the representationists, is denied any extra-mental existence. But, it is real, i.e., it has got a mental existence. For all that the Bahyārtha-śūnya-vādins are busy about establishing is that the entire world, which the ignorant classify as internal and external, is in reality but internal. There is no object but only subject. The Vijñāna itself assumes the appearances of knower, knowledge and the object thereof. Thus, the scope of Avidyā is widened. The ignorance consists, not only of the failure of the individual to grasp the momentariness of all things, or of the belief in any

thing, conceived of as soul, but also of the false belief in the externality of anything like the world. For, say the Vijñānavādins, it is the internal that appears as the external. Therefore, the notion of externality is a delusion; but that which being internal appears as external is not a delusion. It is a reality; may be it is purely subjective, and not objective too, as the realists say. But the negation of objective reality does not amount to say that there is no positive reality whatsoever, everything being but an illusion—an extreme position, reached by the Mādhyamika. Therefore, what one can hope to find of the the doctrine of Māyā in the school of the Bāhyārtha-śūnyavādins is but an introduction thereunto, and nothing more.

In the doctrines of the Mādhyamika, on the other hand, one comes across the conception of Māyā, in full display. We have seen already how through the relentless criticism of each and every argument, put forward by the opponents, and the systematic analysis of every category, mental or material, with a view to expose its inexplicability, the daring Mādhyamika proves essencelessness to be the only essence of all existence, internal as well as external, and establishes Śūnyaṁ as the only truth.

But, if this universe, in all its phases, is unsubstantial and essenceless, a problem arises, how does it look otherwise ? Just like an illusion—answers the Nihilist. As the ignorance about the rope gives rise to the appearance of a serpent, the ignorance about the ultimate reality, i.e., Śūnyaṁ, ignorance, which is known as Saṁvṛti in Mādhyamika terminology, is the main cause behind the appearance of the saṁsāra. Thus, it seems that something akin to what came to be known as Māyā in Vedantic circles, is spoken of as Saṁvṛti by the Mādhyamika. It is held as the cause, responsible for the ultimate reality appearing as something far different from itself. It is, according to him, the product of man's reason. Taken literally, it means a covering, a screen—a term, which might be due to the veiling character of it. For, it is supposed to be keeping the ultimate truth veiled from the eyes of the ignorant—a characteristic, known as 'āvaraṇaśakti', often ascribed to Māyā

by the Vedāntins. This Saṁvṛti again, just like Māyā, has an existence, a validity, nothing less or more than empirical. For, like the Māyā-vādins, the Śūnya-vādins also in their attempts to adjust their flat refusal of the existence of the saṁsāra as a reality with the actual experience pointing to the contrary, and to avoid a seemingly unavoidable clash between their absolutism and ethical life, have propounded existence as having a three-fold stratum. Truth, reality and existence are dealt with, in other words, from three levels, absolute, empirical and phenomenal. Of phenomenal existence are the objects of hallucination, of empirical reality is the world in all its phases; and of ultimate reality is but Śūnyaṁ, maintains the Mādhyamika. It is from the transcendental point of view that the doctrine of Śūnya is maintained; the entire universe, Bhautika and Caitta, the entire saṁsāra with all its sorrow and pain is pointed out to be non-existent. Whether exploding thus the reality of the world as only conditional, the Mādhyamikas believe in something positive as the noumenal reality or not, is not quite clear. For, while one cannot deny the fact that the doctrine of absolute nothingness or a flat refusal to recognise any kind of back-ground to all this illusory appearance of existence, necessarily means absolute scepticism, a contradiction-in-itself, an absurdity of first order. There are at the same time more than a handful indications in the authoritative works on the Mādhyamika philosophy, definitely pointing out that they did not recognise anything positive as the noumenal reality. They are frequently abused by their opponents as the Vaināśikas, and their Hindu critics never lose a chance to dwell upon the absurdity of their philosophy of self-denial. Therefore, though there are some strong reasons in the arguments of some of the modern thinkers, who ably point out the absurdity in which the doctrine of absolute negation would inevitably involve one,—an absurd position which a keen logician like the Mādhyamika would hardly entangle himself with, yet it is too much to read in his conception of ultimate reality something of transcendental existence. For, almost all Hindu critics seem to have taken the doctrine of Śūnyaṁ as a purely

nihilistic stand, and criticised it from that point of view. Even the Mādhyamikas seem to be prepared to accept the charge of nihilism, and justify it as having been the result of a logical scrutiny of experience, and not merely a whimsical denial. And this fact of the Mādhyamika being an absolute nihilist has a great significance in the context of the study of our present theme. For, unlike their opponents, the Vedāntins, who point at the Brahman as the transcendental reality, the ground of and responsible for the apparent existence of Māyā and the world, the Mādhyamikas refuse to admit anything like the ground of all this empirical existence and the substratum of the Saṁvṛti, the cause behind the appearance of the saṁsāra. Like the world and the things in it, the Saṁvṛti also has got but a conditional existence and truth, absolute truth being Śūnyaṁ, declare the Mādyamikas.

Based on the flawless logic, taking nothing for granted, believing in nothing except a rational analysis, the philosophy of the Śūnya-vādins cast a great moulding influence over the development of the doctrine of Māyā in particular, and the philosophical activities in general, among the non-Buddhistic circles of thought of subsequent times, as we shall see presently.

Before taking up the study of the influence, cast by the Saṁvṛti-vādins over the evolution of the Māyā-vāda, we should rather review in brief the development of the said doctrine, that went on in the circles of the Hindu thought during the post-Upaniṣadic and pre-system period, known as epic age.

We find in the Bhagavad-Gītā the most faithful expression of this epic philosophy, which, in spite of its being unsystematized and heterogeneous in contents, was endowed with rich potentialities. Appreciated as 'the most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known language,' it enjoys a unique position in the domain of Indian thought. It not only reflects the rich epic philosophy quite faithfully, or the great truths of the Upaniṣads revitalized according to the needs of the age, but also solves, in a variety of ways, difficult problems, that confront man in his life. Based on the fundamental truths revealed in the Upaniṣads, it, in stead of dealing with

ultimate reality in an abstract way, gives it a cognizable form, at once sweet and magestic. It does not effect any drastic change in the Upaniṣadic doctrines in its attempts to adopt them to the needs of the age. It clothes them in a new garb, more attractive and lovable. It does not invent new methods for the realisation of ultimate reality, yet it revitalizes them into something almost new. It does not alter the conception of Absolute, enunciated through cold logic by the earlier thinkers, yet imparts to it a warm glow, and presents it in the form of Puruṣottama, the Lord of universe,—a remarkable revivification of a 'purātana yoga'. All-embracing character of the teaching of Gītā becomes more explicit, when one ponders over the significance, attached to the Sāṁkhya and Yoga doctrines therein. Yet, in spite of this wide variety of doctrines, the Gītā has succeeded in synthesising them into a harmonious whole. A brief survey of its philosophy will make this clear to us, and will at the same time help us in the appreciation of the conception of Māyā, as evolved during the epic period. In the Gītā, the problem of ultimate reality is handled from a subjective as well as an objective angle. Based on a firm declaration 'of the unreal there is no being, and of the real no non-being[1], the Gītā pursues her objective analysis on the basis of a differentiation between the substance and the shadow. It differentiates[2] the permanent background of the world from its impermanent manifestations, signifies the former as akṣara and the latter as kṣara.[3] The akṣara aspect of the world is called Prakṛti. Its permanence is however in comparison with the changes of the world, and not absolute. Because, it itself is dependent on a higher truth.[4] The Gītā points out that because both the aspects of the world are not permanent and infinite in the ultimate sense of the term, they are not real; because reality and contradiction thereof can never co-exist. And what is impermanent is subject to contradiction in time, and what is finite, to contradiction in space. The very fact that the really

1. B. G. 2, 16.
2. B. G. 8, 18.
3. B. G. 15, 16.
4. B. G. 15, 17.

non-existent (because ever-changing) world appears as otherwise, points to some ultimate reality under-lying it. That ultimate reality is neither the kṣara nor the akṣara Prakṛti, but Brahman, known as Puruṣottama in its personified form,[1] who alone constitutes the ultimate reality. Beginningless and changeless, of a cosmic as well as acosmic character,[2] that infinite being, the Kūṭastha one, dwells in all beings, and animates this play of finite existence.

Adopting a similar method of analysis on subjective lines, breaking up the individual self into its members of physical frame, senses, mind, ego, intellect, the Gītā refuses to accept the first as the inner reality, since it has but a transitory existence,[3] or the second because they too are transitory,[4] and the rest three because they in themselves are prakritic and hence, non-sentient, and declares[5] that the inner reality is deeper than all these. It is Ātman, the kṣetrajña, the one beyond birth and death.[6] Immutable, infinite and rock-seated, he is beyond the range of speech and mind.[7] The body, with all its accessories, physical and psychical, is but a cloak, which he takes on and off. He is the knower of the object and hence is called as kṣetrajña.[8] Himself, he is never cognised. He is resposible for the combination of the body with all its accessories; for the function of combination cannot be attributed to the body or other physical or psychical elements, because they are non-sentient. The whole drama of rise, growth and decay, however, belongs[9] to the Prakṛti, which furnishes the Ātman with the physical and the psychical instruments. Ātman himself is ever free from the blemishes, that inhabit the body, and is akartā. But, labouring under the misconceived identity with the Prakṛti and her evolutions, he considers himself as doer and experiencer, and grieves.[10]

1. B. G. 15, 18.
2. B. G. 13, 13-14.
3. B. G. 2, 13.
4. B. G. 2, 14.
5. B. G. 3, 42.
6. B. G. 2, 20.
7. B. G. 2, 25.
8. B. G. 13, 2.
9. B. G. 13, 29.
10. B. G. 3, 27.

This failure to recognise himself truly, on the part of Ātman, is the cause of saṁsāra.[1]

Having thus found out through the adoption of objective and subjective analysis, two principles of Brahman and Ātman as the fundamental realities, sustaining the external and internal worlds, the Gītā identifies both of them, as one and the same ultimate reality, infinite, transcendent, immutable and immanent. Though thus propounding the truth of non-duality, the Gītā differs from the Upaniṣads that in stead of emphasising the metaphysical idealism as the only true assessment of ultimate reality, it transforms the impersonal Absolute of the Upaniṣads into a supreme godhead, known as Puruṣottama. It gives us as the ultimate reality of our being, not the immanent Absolute which can be described only through the negation of the prakritic attributes, but something far more lovable and approachable, a divinity which exceeds the finite yet participates in it. This conception of ultimate reality in the form of a supreme divinity is the most remarkable contribution of the Gītā in the evolution of Indian thought.

Known as Puruṣottama, since it transcends both the kṣara and the akṣara Puruṣas, this supreme divinity is held as the stay of the entire universe. All this universe, sentient and non-sentient, is nothing more than the prakṛti of Puruṣottama.[4] No wonder then, if He, in whom everything subsists and who himself subsists in nothing else, is omnipresent. Even the ultimate cause of the material universe, the Prakṛti consisting of the three guṇas, is but a śakti of Him[5], and evolves, subject to His will and supervision,[6] into the universe with its multifarious phases.[7] All great cosmic powers derive their sustainance and strength from Him, the fundamental reality of being; and the individual soul also is but an aṁśa of the same enternal principle.[8]

1. B. G. 13, 21.
2. ,, 15, 18.
3. ,, 7, 7.
4. ,, 7, 4-5.
5. B. G. 9, 4-5.
6. ,, 7, 14.
7. ,, 9, 10.
8. ,, 15, 7.

The puruṣa is completely identical with Puruṣottama,[1] the difference felt during the empirical life being but apparent. Being of the character of eternal reality, underlying all finite existences, every thing which is noble and beautiful is but a partial manifestation of the endless glory of Puruṣottama.[2] Like the Brahman of the Upaniṣads, the Puruṣottama, sung so eloquently in the Gītā, is of the character of transcendental existence, the ground of all finite existences, but unlike it. He is friend to all, whom the craving soul may approach through love; the Father of all, whom one can offer one's whole-hearted devotion, and receive in return the fathomless treasures of Peace. For the contemplative seekers after the truth, He is the beginningless, changeless, deathless, eternal principle, pervading and sustaining everything, yet affected by nothing.[3] Puruṣottama, sings the Gītā, is the stay (pratiṣthā) not only of the universe, or of the imperishable Dharma and the supreme Bliss, but of the eternal Brahman too.[4] This view apparently places the supreme god-head, higher than the Pure Existence usually expressed by the term Brahman. It however hardly means, that in the eyes of the Poet of the Gītā, the impersonal self is lower in reality then the personal Īśvara, though the conception of the latter is more practical, more easily comprehensible for devotional and religious purposes, than that of the former; Brahman and Puruṣottama are both but the two aspects, personal and impersonal, of one and the same reality.

Though Lord of all, beginningless and changeless, the Puruṣottama, descends into men 'whenever righteousness languishes and unrighteousness is on the ascendance'. The ignorant, labouring under the veiling influence of Māyā, do not realise the true significance of His avartāra; but the wise one, seeing Puruṣottama in all, and all in the Puruṣottama, and realising His enternal nature of changeless existence, pure consciousness and immortal Bliss, plus endless creative energy, limitless benevolence, fathom-

1. B. G. 10, 20.
2. „ 10, 41.
3. „ 13, 31; 13, 27-38.
4. „ 14, 27.

less compassion, seeks refuge in Him, and attains the supreme deliverance from all evils.[1] The Karman, inspite of its universal influence, does not bind him, who performs his duties, ever conscious of the eternal truth of his being but a tool in the hands of the great Lord, who, seated in the heart of all beings, controls the great play of the saṁsāra.

This characteristic conception of ultimate reality in the form of supreme divinity is far more pronounced than the principles of Ātman and Brahman in the Bhagavad-Gītā. It is considered as more helpful from the practical point of view, and is, hence, more elaborately dwelt upon. It has also cast an undeniable influence over the exposition of other co-related metaphysical problems. Thus, according to the Gītā, this universe, ever-changing, is not, as is the case with the Upaniṣads, imaginary. Even the highest realisation of the ultimate reality does not transform the saṁsāra into a creation of disturbed vijñāna. The Gītā, as we have already seen, analyses the whole drama as consisting of the sentient and non-sentient elements, explains the former as the aṁśa of the Puruṣottama, and the latter (which, it subdivides into vaikritic and prakritic aspects, and traces the former to the latter) as His śakti. The real character of the universe as conceived of in Gītā becomes more explicit, when it ascribes the feat of creation to the Prakṛti, evolving under the supervision of Puruṣottama, or when the supreme divinity identifies itself with all the cosmic powers and potentialities.[2] In short, the world-view as displayed in the Gītā is strongly influenced by the Sāṁkhya doctrine, toned up into harmony with the Vedantic doctrines; theistic, yet with an Advaitic background. From the foregoing discussion, the Gītā-view about the individual soul also becomes clear. He is said to be the aṁśa of the Lord; but what is exactly meant by the term aṁśa is not so clear—an ambiguity, which gave rise to sharp diversity of opinion. At another place, the individual soul, known as kṣetrajña

1. B. G. 18, 62 and 66.
2. B. G. 7,8 and 9,10.
3. B. G. 15,7.

because he knows the kṣetra, i.e., the objective world, is completely identified with the supreme reality. Thus, while in some respects such as the essential character of the self as non-doer etc. some traits of Sāṁkhya origin are easily discernible, the influence of the Upaniṣadic conception of the individual soul as completely identical with Brahman is also palpable. The Gītā-conception of the individual soul is strongly influenced by the Puruṣottama doctrine.

The scope of the conception of ajñāna, as propounded in the Gītā, is therefore, much wider than that in the Upaniṣads or the Sāṁkhya doctrines. The Ajñāna consists not only of the failure to realise the Brahman as the supreme reality, or to grasp the fundamental difference between matter and spirit, but also the fateful ignorance about the Puruṣottama. Labouring under this ajñāna, the Jīvāman deludes himself that there is no supreme being, the controller of all universe, punisher of the wicked and benevolent to the good. Its whole teachings revolving round the doctrine of Puruṣottama, the Gītā places a more pronounced emphasis on the Bhakti-mārga as the easiest mode of approach to the supreme reality. The doctrine of Mokṣa is also enunciated in harmony with the central pivot of its philosophy. Described in various ways such as 'nistraiguṇya' from Sāṁkhya point of view, 'Brāhmī sthiti' an Upaniṣadic conception, the supreme state, which the Jīvātman attains through the favour of the supreme divinity, is also spoken of as the 'paramaṁ dhāma', the abode of Lord, which is self-effulgent and is above the range of great cosmic powers of illumination, and having repaired to which, one transcends pain and sorrow for good.

The study of the idealistic monism, as enunciated in the Upaniṣads, reveals to us two most important forms, in which the

1. B. G. at 13,1.
2. B. G. at 13,2.
3. B. G. at 13,21.
4. B. G. at 16,8.
5. B. G. at 2,45.
6. B. G. at 2,72.
7. B. G. at 8,21.
8. B. G. at 15,6.

Absolute, the supreme reality, is presented. One is all-comprehensive, and other all-exclusive; known as saprapañca and niṣprapañca, respectively. Of the first conception, we find a best example in the Śāṇḍilya-vidyā in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad;[1] and of the second in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka,[2] where Yājñavalkya, the Brahmavid, enlightens Gārgī, a learned lady, on the acosmic aspect of the ultimate reality. Both the views have found lucid elaboration at the hands of the Upaniṣadic seers. For, in their attempts to arrive at a unity in diversity, these philosophers, when confronted with duality in the form of spirit and matter, chose the former in preference to latter, and enunciated the doctrine of relative existence of the latter. To them, the world existed through the existence of the Brahman, and was, therefore, not a separate entity, and thus they arrived at unity. But, ever conscious of the diverse character of the world, which they had propounded as dependent upon Brahman, and feeling compelled to give an explanation of the phenomenon of Brahman appearing in the form of the world, they approached the problem from two angles. From transcendental angle, they enunciated the acosmic aspect of the Absolute, the ultimate metaphysical reality, and threw significant hints at the purely illusory character of all finite existence; from the empirical point of view, they propounded the cosmic aspect of the self-same eternal reality, and explained the universe as an actual emanation from the Brahman. The former view came to be known later on as Brahma-vivarta-vāda, and the latter as Brahma-pariṇāma-vāda. Of course, there are only significant hints of these two views unsystematised in the Upaniṣads. Their intricate features owe their rise to a later period. Both these cosmic and acosmic views implied, in their own way, the doctrine of Māyā. If, from the transcendental point of view, the Absolute is the only ultimate reality, what is the character of this show of finite existence ? It is of an illusory character, answer the niṣprapañca-brahma-

1. Vide Cha. U. 3,14.
2. B. U. 3,8.

vādins. As a serpent, superimposed on the rope, is nothing but an illusion, so the universe, superimposed on the infinite ultimate reality, i.e., the Brahman, is but an illusion, in as much as it, non-existent by self, appears as existent through the existence of its ground. The saprapañca-brahma-vādins, on the other hand, offer a more realistic explanation. The Absolute, omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent, turns itself into the form of the universe and tries to fulfill its inexplicable motives. In the former, we witness the pure advaitism in its opening phases; while the latter presents the Viśiṣṭādvaitism in its preliminary stage. In the former we see the doctrine of Māyā, advocated so as to signify the illusory character of the finite existence. But the latter employ the word śakti to denote the divine power,[1] through which the Absolute, of the character of existence, sentience and bliss, transforms itself into the form of finite existence.

Both these currents of Upaniṣadic conception of ultimate reality, essential character of the saṁsāra and its relation to that reality, both these readings of the doctrine of Māyā, developed uninterruptedly through the great post-Upaniṣadic and pre-system age, gradually assumed clearer aspects. The development of the Vedic theism on the lines of famous trinity, Brahmā-Viṣṇu-Maheśa, and the rise of other currents of thought, somewhat akin to the later Sāṁkhya and Yoga, also cast a moulding influence over this post-Upaniṣadic and pre-system evolution of the Upaniṣadic doctrine of Absolute and Māyā. We have a typical example of this in the Bhagavad-Gītā. The way in which it comes upon the ultimate reality, the Ātman from subjective point of view and Brahman from objective one, is a tried one by the Upaniṣadic seers. Identification of the external reality with the internal one, and achievement of unity in diversity is also an Upaniṣadic method. Thus, the fundamentals on which the Gītā bases its teachings are essentially Upaniṣadic. Even the niṣprapañca aspect of the ultimate reality, it has not forgotten to dwell upon. A few significant hints are also thrown

1. Vide Śve. U. 4,10.

at the illusory character of the saṁsāra. But, it is the saprapañca aspect that receives an overwhelmingly greater attention in the Gītā. Its activistic spirit definitely tends to give the teaching of Gītā a more realistic and less idealistic tone. The universe is more a reality than an illusion, a reality emanating from, vibrating in, and submerging into the Absolute, known as Puruṣottama. For, the Absolute of the Gītā is identical with the Absolute of the Upaniṣads, and is, at the same time something more. Under the transforming influence of the Bhāgavata religion, it has developed into a divinity at once lovable. The Māyā, the śakti, faintly hinted at in the Upaniṣads, as the power through which the infinite turns itself into finite and yet remains unchanged in fundamentals, comes to be associated with the Gītā-conception of ultimate reality. Its conception, however, has grown fuller in details. Under the influence of the Sāṁkhya doctrine of three guṇas, Māyā is described as 'guṇa-mayī, divine, consisting of the three guṇas, and of the character of śakti-viśeṣa of Puruṣottama; it deludes the ignorant and veils from them the eternal reality lying beneath the saṁsāra.[1] Though this beginningless succession of finite existence exist through the changeless existence of Puruṣottama, very few indeed can realise the Lord, for he is ever enveloped in His Yoga-māyā,[2] and almost all the universe, sentient and non-sentient, is labouring under the fateful influence of His māyā.[3]

The Gītā conception of Māyā as the divine power of the Lord of the universe becomes althemore manifest, when the Poet, identifying Himself with the ultimate reality known as Īśvara, declares[4] in ringing tones that the Lord of all, abiding in the heart of all beings, controls, through His divine power, Māyā, the entire universe in its multifarious phases. This doctrine of Māyā in the Gītā is strongly influenced by the Sāṁkhya doctrine of Prakṛti. The Māyā, the power of the supreme divinity, not

1. B. G. 7,14.
2. B. G. 7,15.
3. B. G. Vide B. G. 7,25.
4. B. G. 7,13.
5. B. G. 18,61.

only veils the supreme truth from the ignorant, but is also an all-powerful instrument through which the infinite turns itself into finite, and fulfills its inscrutiable motives. Viewed from the point of finite existence, Māyā has many a point of similarity with the Prakṛti of the Sāṁkhyas; both consist of the three guṇas and both command a darkening influence over the individual soul. Yet Māyā differs, in one important respect at least, from the Prakṛti. It depends upon the supreme divinity for its very existence. The Parkṛti of the Sāṁkhyas has its own independent existence. It is because of the total dependence upon the supreme divinity that characterises Māyā that the Gītā attributes the creation and the dissolution of the universe to the former and not to the latter, or ignores the latter to such an extent as to describe the former having transformed Himself into the universe. These are all, however, the inferences, sometimes not directly drawn from some of the fundamental doctrines, stated by the work under review, during its positivistic teachings. For, with different currents of thought, influencing the views expressed therein, the philosophy of the Gītā does not, nor can it be reasonably expected to be, considering the age of evolution in which it sprang up, reflect the clear-cut doctrines of a particular system. Indeed, it is this very co-mingling of various influences that has induced us to take up the Gītā, in the study of the prominent phases in the evolution of the pre-Śaṅkara Māyāvāda, as the faithful reflection of the epic philosophy.

Its unique transformation of the indescribable, acosmic, supreme reality of the Upaniṣads into something approachable through love, its characteristic explanation of the universe as emanating from that supreme divinity and subsisting therein, its singular doctrine of Māyā, the divine power, through which Puruṣottama not only transforms Himself into the universe, sentient and non-sentient, but also descends into man, at critical times,—some of the outstanding characteristics of the preachings of Gītā cast such an undeniable influence over the evolution of the Vedāntic doctrines through the later periods, that even the staunch ācārya of the orthodox Advaita school,

Śaṅkarācāraya, could not but comment upon it and show it to be in complete harmony with the particular stand he offered. The doctrine of Māyā, as propounded by the Gītā, not only moulded the later thoughts on ontological problems, but itself came to be one of the widely accepted explanations of the riddle of existence.

The famous Brahma-Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa represent a yet another important phase in the pre-Śaṅkara evolution of Vedāntic thought in general, and of the doctrine of Māyā in particular. Representing a hoary age, post-Upaniṣadic, yet pre-system, the Sūtras give us valuable information as regards the philosophical tendencies of a vast period, about which little is known otherwise. Valuable though it is, the Sūtra-philosophy has its own draw-backs. The very Sūtra-form, in which it has been enunciated, robs it of unambiguity of statement. The historical fact that the Sūtras gave rise to a bewildering diversity of interpretations in later ages, and were hotly claimed as their authoritative basis by the Vedāntins of various shades of opinion, is enough to point out the harshly concise character of the original statements. In this, the Sūtras only betray the mode of expression, prevalent at that time. Another characteristic of the Sūtra-philosophy is the Upaniṣadic influence, palpable even in its distant chords. Many a Sūtra, in stead of dealing with the philosophical problems in an independent way, concerns itself with the problem of interpretation of the ambiguous statements in the revealed scriptures,[1] and try to elucidate the Vedāntic stand through the interpretation of these unvoilable authorities in favour thereof. This all-predominating aptitude for Upaniṣadic validity proves in the end to be detrimental to the value of the work as an independent enunciation of original views. The extent of the Upaniṣadic influence over the work of Bādarāyaṇa can also be judged from its remarkable tendency towards co-mingling the metaphysical themes with what cannot be strictly characterized as such. Thus, not a negligible number of the

1. Vide : B.S. 1, 1, 6, 12; 1, 1, 10, 27; and the like.

Sūtras discusses the subtle theological problems with an indirect philosophical bearing, and sometimes grapples with the problems of practical discipline. And, the province of Yogic mysticism is almost invaded, when the Sūtrakāra, in stead of enunciating the fundamental Vedāntic tenets, begins to elucidate the process of the departure of an individual soul from the gross body at the termination of the span of its mundane existence. This crippling brevity of statement as well as the heterogeneous character of subject-matter, which the Sūtras have inherited from the Upaniṣads, their predecessors, renders it extremely difficult to attribute any special shade of Vedāntic opinion to the philosophical outlook, maintained by them, to the exclusion of the others. In spite of all this, however, the help which these Sūtras extend, in our attempts to assess the philosophical conditions of the said era, is indeed inexaggerable. They throw a vivid light on the internal tendencies, gradually appearing within the school of Advaita Vedānta, and significantly hint at the existence of various sub-schools of thought, originating from the prominent thinkers of the age, such as Āśmarathya or Auḍulomi, or Kārṣṇājini, or Kāśakṛtsna, the sub-schools, most of which did not survive the great post-Upaniṣadic and pre-system era. Coming into headlong clashes with rival non-Vedāntic schools of thought, orthodox such as the Sāṁkhya, or the Naiyāyika, or the heterodox, such as the Buddhists of different varieties or the Jains, the Sūtras furnish us with an invaluable information as regards the philosophical conditions, prevalent at that time, in the domains of non-Vedāntic thought too. Considered from this point of view, the Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa assume a unique importance. The deep-rooted characteristics of the work, noted above, however render it nearly impossible that a detailed out-look of such a highly subtle philosophical thought, such as Vedānta, should be reflected therein in all its richness. The fundamentals of the Vedānta metaphysics, however, are stated with an unmistakable emphasis. Faithful to the progamatic spirit, inherited from the Upaniṣads, the entire philosophical out-look, as enunciated by the Sūtras,

vibrates with the predominent emphasis, which it lays on the transcendental realm of being themselves suggest the existence of something, unconditional in validity, which lies beneath them and is thus responsible for the phenomena of finite being, it is thus stressed.[1] Such an ultimate principle cannot be non-sentient by character; for, had it been so, the creation of the universe by volition, as attributed to it by the unimpeachable authorities, would fall down as false[2]. Non-sentience which characterizes some aspects of the universe does not inevitably imply the non-sentient character of its ultimate cause. Because, even on our empirical plane of experience, many a case can be detected where the non-sentient definitely arises out of the sentient.[3] This transcendental principle, it is further pointed out[4], is not only an efficient cause of the phenomena of finite being, but also a constituent cause thereof. Bādarāyaṇa, however, does not go beyond stating this fundamental doctrine, now and then.[5] He does not make it clear to us in what exact way he conceives of the double causal character of the ultimate principle of being. We cannot decide once for all whether he is an advocate of Pariṇāma-vāda, a protagonist of that of Vivarta. His emphatic elucidation of the all-comprehensive view of the supreme reality[6], which almost presents the noumenal truth as a supreme Deity and thus clearly betrays the theisitic influence, would induce one to include the illustrious Sūtrakāra within the fold of Pariṇāma-Vādins. His characteristic employment of the 'Kṣīra-dadhi-dṛṣṭānta'[7] in order to illustrate the causal relations between the unconditional and the conditional realities of being, is also a powerful indication in the above direction. On the other hand, he maintains

1. Vide :—B. 1, 1, 2, 2.
2. 1, 1, 5, 5.
3. 2, 1, 3. 6.
4. 1, 4, 7, 23 to 1, 4, 7, 27.
5. 2, 3, 15, 40.
6. 2, 1, 10, 30.
7. 2, 1, 8, 24.

elsewhere[1], that though both the cosmic and the acosmic views of the noumenal reality are equally met with in the sacred texts, it is the latter that deserves ultimacy and not the former.[2] Had the saṁsāra been an actual transformation of the transcendental reality, the former would have inevitably contaminated the latter with its impurities and defects. The very fact that even during the span of time, when the finite universe actually exists with all its imperfections, the transcendental principle does remain detached, unaffected, ever-pure, indicates that the relation between the two is less vital and intimate[3].

Essentially pragmatic in character, the philosophical outlook of the illustrarious Bādarāyaṇa does not concern itself much with the problems pertaining to the two lower realms of being. There are stray considerations, no doubt, which try to solve the empirical problems; but they are comparatively few, and are indulged into, only with a view to elucidate the ultimate truth, lying behind them. Naturally, the sentient aspect of the universe receives a better scrutiny at the hands of the illustrious philosopher than the non-sentient one. Naturally too, more emphasis is palpably laid on the transcendental aspect of the Jīvātman than on its empirical one. Of the character of sentience[4], the self of every being is essentially immortal,—he thus maintained.[5] Eternally identical with eternal truth, the Jīvātman, just like the pure Ātman, is, taken by itself, devoid of any activity; and is hence non-door. It is merely through the adjuncts, superposed on him, that he seems to be the doer of the deeds, good or bad, and the enjoyer of the fruits thereof. Besides this conception of unconditional identity, as the true relation between the Jīvātman and the Ātman, the Sūtrakāra faintly hints at other modes of relation between these

1. Vide :—3, 2, 5, 11.
2. 3, 2, 5, 14.
3. 2, 1, 9, 28.
4. 2, 3, 12, 19.
5. 2, 3, 11, 17.

principles of high philosophical interest. Thus, by maintaining that the former is the 'ābhāsa' of the latter, Bādarāyaṇa cetainly foreshadows the 'Pratibimba-Vāda' or the reflection-theory[1] of later times. Interestingly enough, the 'Avacḥcḥeda-Vāda or the limitation-theory is also vaguely suggested by the Sūtrakāra through his elucidation of the Jīvāman the 'aṁśa' of the Ātman[2]. The remarkable indifference of the Sūtra-kāra towards the other aspects of empirical being mainly of speculative interest, stands out althemore vividly, when constrasted with the predominent attention, these facets acquire in the later epoches of evolution.

No wonder then that the unique speculative doctrines such as Māyā should enjoy but a poor reception at the hands of such a practical philosopher as Bādrāyaṇa. Even the close scrutiny of his Sūtras does not succeed in giving us any clear idea of his conception of this highly flexible principle, which was destined to grow up later on into a uniquely important doctrine. Among five hundred and odd Sūtras, not a single reference can he detected, which can be indebatebly held as elucidating this unique conception. In the Upaniṣads, we have seen the doctrine, faintly elucidated under the terms of Avidyā or Tamaḥ, and actually characterized as Māyā in a few places. It is, moreover, powerfully hinted at by the Upaniṣadic philosophers. In the Sūtras, the situation not only does not grow brighter for the doctrine, but it actually worsens. The terms, such as 'avidyā' and 'ajñāna' are conspicuous by their absence and though the term of Māyā occurs in one of the Sūtras[3], it does so in its ordinary sense of 'a mere hallucination'. This does not mean that the Sūtra philosophy is totally unconscious of the doctrine of Māyā. Being of a fundamental organic value, the conception is indispensible for the Vedāntic stand. Moreover, a sympathetic study of the Sūtras reveals to us the doctrine

1. Vide :—B. 2, 8, 17, 50.
2. 2, 3, 17, 43.
3. B, 3, 2, 1, 3.

as implicitly present in the philosophical scheme of the Sūtrakāra. In the Upaniṣads we have seen the two-fold enunciation of fundamental reality of being; this two-fold enunciation again necessitates an acceptance of a principle, capable of reconciling the truth as revealed with the truth as ordinarily apprehended. With the all-inclusive view of ultimate reality, this principle assumes the appearance of a power; with the all-exclusive one, it becomes more abstract and nearly denotes an illusion. We have already noted above that both the views of the transcendental reality are singularly present in the philosophical outlook of Bādarāyaṇa. This fact inevitably induces us to search for the doctrine of Māyā, as implicitly handled by the philosopher; and the search reveals to us a few points, taking our basis whereupon we can have a view of this subtle principle, as conceived by the author. The remarkable inclination to the all-comprehensive view of the transcendental reality, which the philosopher betrays, induces him to conceive of the Māyā as the supreme power of the omni-potent Brahman. It is in order to satisfy its inscrutably playful motives, that the supreme being assumes the appearance of the finite universe, it is thus stressed[1]; and logically the principle of Māyā plays the part of an instrument by which the One becomes (or appears to have become) the many. Though the Sūtrakāra misses no opportunity to dismiss the tripuṭī of the knower, the known and the knowledge as only apparent[2] or to stress the fundamental oneness of being, now and then[3], the empirical universe seems to be something more substantial than mere illusion in his view. His sharp refusal to place it on an equal footing with the dream-world, and his pointed remark that the latter is mere hallucinatory appearance,[4] induce us to take him for an advocate of a less extremist world-view.

1. Vide:—2, 1, 11, 33.
2. 2, 1, 5, 13.
3. 2, 1, 6, 14.
4. 3, 2, 1, 3.

The great pains which he takes to trace out a systematic process of cosmic evolution, also points in the same direction. This has its inevitable repercussions on the conception of Māyā. And, it is implicitly conceived of more as an illusion-producing power than as an illusion. Herein we find the subtle influence of theistic tendencies at work. Indeed, such an influence is palpable even in the concepion of transcendental reality. Of course the less extremist character of the principle of Māyā as implicitly conceived of by Bādarāyaṇa does not prevent him from associating with it the notion of mystery which is as old as the principle itself. The principle of Māyā, as implicitly conceived of by him, is besides, of an elementary type to offer sharp contrast with its other versions. The subtle inclination towards the cosmic view of the transcendental reality and also towards the realistic world-view, the Sūtra phase betrays, has largely influenced the doctrine of Māyā, implicit therein.

It would be interesting to compare the Sūtra-Conception of māyā with the same as enunciated by the Kārikās of Ācārya Gauḍapāda. For, the last among the most important phases in the pre-Śankara evolution of the doctrine of Māyā, is the phase reflected in the Kārikās of Ācārya Gauḍapāda, the most prominent advaitin of pre-Śaṅkara times. Flourishing in the age, surcharged with refined idealism of Buddhistic origin, the philosopher, not only gives us in a simple language a fair outline of the main tenets of Advaitic School, but also presents a bold attempt to reach the advaitic conclusions through the channels, mostly used by the Mādhyamika Buddhists. Naturally influenced by the unique character of the Upaniṣad (the vital passages whereof can be interpreted along advaitic as well as the Buddhistic lines) and by the idealistic tendencies, current at that time, the Kārikās have given rise to keen contention among the modern critics as regards their essential origin. The close study of the philosophical outlook, enunciated by them, however, makes it clear beyond doubt that in spite of the ideological and terminological

similarities with the Buddhistic currents of thought, the Kārikās are definitely inclined towards the advaitic solution of the riddle of life. A realistic assessment of the Kārikās would be, we think, neither to take them as representing purely Buddhistic idealism, nor to view them as enunciating a wholly advaitic outlook, but to appreciate them as reflecting the Upaniṣadic monism, gradually evolving into the metaphysical advaitism, through the means, generally adopted by the Buddhistic idealism. The Kārikās constitute the vital link, inter-connecting the Upaniṣadic phase with the system-phase of Advaita Vedānta through the medium of Buddhistic idealism. And this gives the philosophical outlook, enunciated by them, a unique significance, which, no student of the doctrinal evolution of advaitic thought can afford to ignore. Much more so is the case with the doctrine of Māyā. For, it is in the Kārikās alone that we can detect this unique doctrine about to emerge in its purely advaitic character, that remained predominent throughout its later career. Let us, therefore, undertake an objective study of the salient features of the philosophical outlook, evolved by the Ācārya in his Kārikās, with a special regard for their bearings on the doctrine of Māyā.

The first chapter, running in strict accordance with the the text of the Upaniṣad, has hardly any independent theme of its own. It is mainly concerned with the exposition of the doctrine of three-fold appearance of the Ātman according to the three stages of animation. It points out at length the real Ātman, the turīya, the ground of superimpositions of the distinctions such as viśva, taijasa and prājña, differentiates him from them all, lays down that on the realisation of the Ātman, as fundamentally different from, and as the ground of the appearance of, these three alone, that the seeker can, attain supreme bliss. It hints at the illusory character of the saṃsāra, and ends with a practical exposition of the technique of conscentration on the syllable 'Om', as the means of achieving various ends, including

the supreme liberation itself. Being thus mainly concerned with the topics, not directly bearing upon the doctrine of Māyā, the chapter cannot be held of much importance for our present study. It has, nevertheless, thrown a few significant hints at the doctrine.[1]

Unlike the first, the later three chapters of the Kārikās, dealing with the ontological truth of saṁsāra, the problem of duality and the subtle Ajāti-vāda, constitute the original contribution of the Ācārya to the advaitic thought.

In the second chapter, the Ācārya tries to establish a fundamental doctrine that this entire saṁsāra, characterised by finite existence, is merely an appearance, Just as the objects, which are perceived during the state of dream, are unreal, the objects that are perceived during the state of jāgrat are also unreal; because, he argues, both are 'perceived'. Had the objects, that are peceived during the state of jāgrat been really existent, they would never have been subject to the prior and the destructive negations. Nor the actions performed, and the results enjoyed therefrom, during the state of jāgrat, can prove the really existent nature of the object, perceived in that state, because just as the actions, gone through the state of dream , are contradicted in that of jāgrat, those, perfromed in the latter also meet with a similar contradiction during the former. How can then the jāgrat-objects claim greater validity than the dream-objects ? The popular notion that the dream-objects are non-existent, because they are never actually perceived, but the jāgrat-objects are really existent, because they are actually perceived, need not disturb the thoughtful. For, just as the existence of dream-objects is contradicted by our jāgrat-experience, that of the objects, perceived during the jāgrat also is nullified by their failure to turn up during the states of svapna and sussupti. As regards the popular

1. Vide :—G. K. 1, 1, 1, 17; 1, 16.

distinction of objects, perceived in the waking state (which are really non-existent as the whole) into the existent and the non-existent, well, we have a likewise distinction among the dream-objects too. Thus, the Buddhist idealist was fairly correct in denying the existence of the dream-objects as well as the jāgrat-objects. because of their being non-existent during the state of suṣupti. But where he blundered was in his total negation of the eternal Ātman too. Because it is the Ātman, changeless and deathless, who, with his own māyā, fancies his own self into innumerable objects that form the universe, and perceives them as something different from himself. Had there been nothing, not even the Self of the perceiver, existent, as the nihilist wold have it, who would have realised the eternal truth of the really non-existent nature of all objects, internal as well as external ? The objects of dream and other mental objects, are existent so long as they are being actually perceived; while the jāgrat-objects have as relative existence; but this distinction, while it indicates that the appearance of the latter as existent is longer than that of the former, does not endow the latter with a real existence of its own. Nor does the fact that the objects, perceived by citta alone, are more vague in appearance than those experienced by the external senses as well, necessarily means that the latter have got their own independent existence; for, this difference is caused by other reasons. It is the Self, one and without second, who, having fancied himself into the individual soul, the doer of the deeds, good, and bad, and the experiencer of the results thereof, superimposes various attributes upon himself, and gives rise thereby to the sappearance of the saṁsāra in its multifarious aspects and activities, inter-laced by the relation of cause and effect. That the self, one and chnageless, should have been fancied into saṁsāra, full of diversity and ever-changing, is due to the māyā of the self—the māyā, that deludes even the self.[1] And just because it is the Ātman himself that

1. Vide:—G. K. 2, 19.

has fancied himself into the diversity of the universe,—the universe, which is not a bit better than one perceived in the dream, or an illusory appearance, conjured up by the conjurer,—there is really speaking neither bondage nor the liberation therefrom[1]. And in this fundamental truth of oneness of the Ātman alone lies the complete freedom from fear; for, the very conception of duality is the source of fear.

Stressing the fundamental oneness of the individual souls, the Ācārya in the third chapter of his work ably states by means of the simile of the ākāśa and the superficial distinctions, devised therein, through the superposition of the attributes, that the mutual distinctions, differing conditions and diversifying attributes, which seem to characterise the individual souls, are but superposed on them, and hence do not affect their fundamental oneness and nature in the least. For, the relation between the Jīvātmans and the Ātman is of identity alone. Whatever activities may the individual bodies indulge into, the Ātman that sustains them is never affected by them. This complete identity of the Jīvātman with the Ātman is the main import of the Upaniṣads, which, through subjective analysis, point to the same ultimate reality, viz., the Ātman, sustaining all Jīvātmans. And, wherever differentiation there is of the former from the latter, it is only in keeping with adhyāropāpavāda-nyāya[2]. It is through Māyā that the eternal, infinite reality appears as though having become transitory and infinite. But it does not actually become so. For, in that case it would be doomed to death. Nor is it possible for a thing to alter its nature. How can then the Ātman, eternal and changeless, one and infinite, ever change itself into the real Jīvātmans, many, mortal and finite? Therefore, the texts that repudiate dualistic reading of ultimate reality in one place, and sing of the one as having become many in the beginning of the creation, in the other, should be explained, to avoid

1. 2, 32.
2. 3, 11, to 15.

self-contradiction, as describing the fundamental oneness and the apparent manyness of the ultimate reality, brought about through māyā. There is many a scriptural text, which, by the categorical repudiation of the idea of the birth of the ultimate reality and by the exposition of it through the negation of the attributes, superposed thereon, points to the same conclusion. The ever-existent cannot be really born; it may look however as being born, through Māyā. What in the state of dream, or in that of jāgrat, it is the 'manas' that vibrates through māyā and gives forth the appearance of many. That everything, which appears as different from the Ātman is merely a creation of the manas, can be adduced from the fact that whenever (as in the suṣupti) the manas stops vibrating, the manyness is nowhere to be found[1]. That is why in the state of samādhi, when the sādhaka stops it from vibrating, he does not perceive any thing else different from his own Ātman; for, owing its rise to the vibrations of the manas, it does not exist at all at that time. And it is then that the Ātman of the sādhaka, eternal, infinite, indivisible, perceives himself as such. Though, thus, the absence of vibration of manas, leading to the absence of the perception of and thence to the absence of the existence of everything different from the Ātman, is common to both the states of deep sleep and indeterminate samādhi in the first state, it is due to the predominance of 'tamas' in the antaḥkaraṇa, and hence is of no help towards self-realisation. The second state alone is of importance; because in it alone the sādhaka, with his mind non-vibrating because fully controlled, beholds his own self, the Ātman, the birthless, ever-luminous, all-knowing, eternal reality, which is beyond all designations. And as the absolute cessation of pain and the attainment of supreme bliss are possible only for those who have controlled their minds, have gained proficiency in the asparśa-yoga, the sādhaka should ever remind his mind of the pain that invariably accompanies the enjoyment of the senses, and turn it inwards, where having beholden the Eternal One, it does not runs again after the transi-

1. 3, 29 to 31.

tory. All this scheme of self-control and concentration, is, however, described from the empirical point of view; and does not affect the supreme truth that there is no Jīvātman born, no saṁsāra existent, and Brahman alone, which is of the character of eternal existence, pure consciousness and immortal bliss, is true.

In the fourth chapter, the Ācārya, following a dialectical form of argument, states, in brief, the views held by the sat-kārya-vādins and asat-kāryavādins, explains their criticism of each other, and thus arrives at his own favourite doctrine of Ajāti. If a thing is either existent or non-existent prior to its emergence into being, in both the cases, the position is unavoidably illogical. Therefore, nothing is born, says he. The universe would have been really existent, had the Ātman, the infinite, eternal reality underlying it, changed itself into it. And that is impossible; for, nothing mortal, finite or infinite, can change its prakṛiti, and become something other than self. If the emergence of the universe is explained as the evolution of the prakṛiti, the prakṛiti and the vikṛti would come to interchange mutual characteristics, because according to the Sāṅkhya doctrine they are both identical with each other; and that would result in endless confusion. The common belief in the existence, if the saṁsāra is illogical, can be viewed from another point also, says the Ācarya. Thus according to all those who accept the existence of the saṁsāra, the body with all its accesories (known as phala), is the cause of the adṛṣṭa (known as hetu), and the adṛṣṭa in its turn is the cause of the body. But this mutual determination, loudly acclaimed as working at the cycle of birth and death is itself illogical. If hetu and phala come into being in succession, order must be pointed out, and accounted for; that is impossible. If then both come into being simultaneously, there can be no causal relation between them. Again the phala, itself unborn, cannot bring the hetu into existence and remain non-existent, the latter cannot produce the former. Thus, the subtle thinkers,

1. Vide :—G. K. 3, 37 and 48.

antagonistic to Ajāti-vāda, themselves have, through their propogation of indefensible doctrines, advocated it to the full. An escape from the said riddle is put forward by some by widening its scope, and applying it to every aspect of life; but surely an aggrevation of a difficulty is no explanation of it[1]. Again, if existent before, the thing cannot come into existence. If not, it is equally impossible for the non-existent to become existent. The thing cannot come into existence by itself, nor can it be brought into existence by others. Therefore, nothing is ever born. Those who maintain that without the external world of heterogeneous character, there cannot be such a wide variety in the waves of prajñapti are quite mistaken. For, on deeper investigation nothing is found in the external world that can be held as responsible for the said vibrations in the prajñapti. The Citta therefore does not cognize either the objects or the āhhāsas thereof, an external character; but it assumes the appearance of various objects, says the idealist. So far he is right. But he himself errs by taking the vijñāna-vṛttis for real things. Because, the internal objects are also unreal, since they like the external objects are 'perceived'. Whatever is perceived is an object, and not a subject; and every object is of conditional, and therefore unreal validity. Again, to accept the beginninglessness of the saṁsāra means to accept its endlessness. Nor can the mokṣa, with a beginning, be without an end. Therefore, every thing in the saṁsāra, including the deliverance therefrom, is unreal[2]. The objects, perceived by citta in the state of dream, are all false. Same character of 'being perceptible by Citta' characterises all saṁsāra. Therefore the latter is as false as the former. The dream-objects, unanimously held as 'asat', owe their rise to (the impressions, left by the experience of the objects, perceived in the jāgrat, now had the jāgrat-objects be sat, the dream-objects, rising out of them, would never have been asat. The very fact that they are so, establishes the asat

1. G. K. 4. 14 to 21.
2. 4. 29-30.

character of their cause too. Of course, this causal relation also has but a conditional validity; for, no casual relation is ever possible from transcendental point of view. No existence is ever possible of a non-existent thing with a non-existent cause, or of an existent thing with a non-existent cause, or of an existent thing and existent cause, or of a non-existent thing with an existent cause[1]. That the world, full of diversity, is actually perceived and that one's daily activities therein are also uncontradicted to a great extent, does not necessarily mean that it has got a real existence. For, even an elephant, conjured up by the conjurer, is actually perceived and touched by the by-standers. It has yet got but a phenomenal existence. It is the Ātman, which, birthless, motionless, attributeless, secondless, appears through his māyā, as being born, restlessly active, endowed with attributes, and full of diversity. It is the eternal changeless vijñāna that vibrates and assumes the appearance of the tripuṭī. The moment it stops looking as though vibrating through māyā, it relinquishes the said appearance and remains as 'vijñāna-mātraṁ'. Just as the various apearances, such as crookedness, which had appeared in the flaming torch, while it was vibrating, and had disappeared, the moment it was steady, had not come from anywhere else, nor did they go anywhere else, nor had entered the flame itself (simply because they were the appearances), in the same way, the entire world, which appears in the vijñāna so long as it is vibrating, and disappears as soon as it is steady, has got an existence dependent on the eternal vijñāna. Its appearance is unaccountable. For, the very conception of causal relation being untenable, neither it itself northe Ātman can be held as the cause at the root of it. It is the failure to grasp this eternal truth of ajāti, which makes the incessant process of birth and death, appears as existent, and thus causes saṁsāra. But this māyā, this saṁvṛti too, has got a phenomenal validity[2]. One cannot characterize the saṁsāra as either eternal or

1. G. K. 4, 37-40.
2. G. K. 4, 57-58.

transitory; because, it is as good as non-existent. Ātman too is undefiniable as such; because he is ever beyond distinction. Only the thoughtful one realises that the duality, perceived in jāgrat and svapna, is nothing but an ābhāsa in the Citta, vibrating through the influence of māyā. The birth and death of beings in the world are not a bit more real than those, perceived in a dream, or conjured up by the conjurer.[1] The notion of duality is utterly baseless and is at the root of all mischief. Knowing this and waking up to the eternal truth that everything in the saṁsāra, including the designation of the Ātman, as eternal etc., is due to saṁvṛti and hence unreal, the thoughtful one grasps the subtle truth of ajāti, transcends grief and attains supreme good. No more labouring under the wrong belief in the existence of anything else than the Ātman, he rises above attachment and pravṛti and in this undisturbable state of pleasant equilibrium-shines forth the Ātman in all his glory. Endless indeed, on the other hand, are the vikalaps that rise in the mind of the ignorant of the essential oneness of supreme reality.

Like the ākāśa by nature, are all the Ātmans, beginningless, one without second, ever-scient, ever-peaceful and self-luminous. He who knows this, verily, attains immortality. But, doomed are those who always see duality; for even the slightest notion thereof prevents one from transcending fear and attachment for good. This, however, is from an empirical point of view. For, all the Ātmans, speaking from transcendental point of view, are eternally free from the influence of māyā, their effulgence ever-pure, and unaffected by blemishes, ever-enlightened and ever-free.

The philosophy of Ācārya Gauḍapada, reviewed above in brief, has got some important characteristics, which enjoy a close bearing upon the study of the doctrine of Māyā, and which therefore claim a fair appreciation. The philosophy of the ācārya, it is almost needless to observe, is essentially based on the teachings of the Upaniṣads.. It represents, in a more developed and elaborated stage, the niṣprapañca aspect of the

1. 4, 61 to 64.

Absolute. True, there are[1] certain references to the ultimate metaphysical reality that hint at the all-inclusive aspect also. True, the Ātman is sometimes characterised as Bhagavat[2] or as Deva,[3] yet on the whole, the influence of the acosmic view, so eloquently expressed in the original Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad[4] is undeniable. That is the reason why the Ācarya is now and then at pains, particularly when he has given a cosmic description of the ultimate reality, to point out that it is the emprical stand that he is adopting.[5] This acosmic conception of the metaphysical reality necessarily adopts the doctrine of 'Brahmavivarta' as the explanation of the appearance of the saṁsāra, so different from the fundamental reality, and brings in the doctrine of Māyā, as the principle, which shows, only for the time being, the acosmic Absolute as cosmic. Both these views about the noumenal reality were expressed, as we have already seen in the Upaniṣads, and continued to develop uninterruptedly through the later period. In the Gītā, we have seen the flourish of the cosmic all-comprehensive aspect of the transcendental reality. It is in the Kārikās of Ācārya Gauḍapāda, that the acosmic side came to an eleboration of major importance. This, however, the ācārya has done through the masterly enunciation of the doctrine of advaita and ajāti. Perceiving the ultimate reality through the subjective channels, an idealist of a high order, he speaks of the Absolute more as Ātman than as Brahman. To him, the Ātman alone is real, the universe, sentient and otherwise, false; fasle, that is to say, not as the name and form that are assumed by mṛttikā, when talked of as ghaṭa, but false as the serpent superposed on the rope. As the principle, responsible for the appearance of the Ātman as the saṁsāra, the Ācarya points to Māyā. The entire saṁsāra, the very essence whereof is diversity, is nothing but māyā, an

1. G. K. 1. 10.
2. 4, 84.
3. 2. 12.
4. 1, 7.
5. Vide :—4, 74 and 4, 60.

illusion.[1] The conception of Māyā, as propounded by the Ācarya, tends a bit to its version, maintained in the circles of saprapañca-brahma-vādins, when the One is said to have become many through his Māyā[2], or when the appearance of the ever-existent as coming into being is attributed to it,[3] or when the vibration of manas giving rise to the semblance of diversity, is accounted for as having been due to it[4]. The māyā however is not the divine power of some supreme divinity. It is dependent on the Ātman[5]. It is the māyā of the Ātman that gives rise to the appearance of all saṁghātas[6], that deludes even the Ātman himself[7]. But what is the exact nature of this dependence of māyā is not made clear. And the reason is obvious. For, though the appearance of finite existence is attributed to māyā dependent upon the Ātman, it has been made explicitly clear, that this attribution is made from a vyāvahārika stand; it has got no real validity. Just as the serpent, superposed on the rope, being unreal, the cause thereof, the ignorance of the rope, too, is unreal, the saṁsāra being vitatha,[8] the cause thereof, to wit: the māyā, too, is nothing better than mithyā. Like the saṁsāra, the māyā too does not exist. And, the position being so, what type of relation, can ever be conceived of as existing between the real and the unreal ? The exact nature of the saṁsāra or of the māyā, the reason behind it, is unthinkable, inexplicable. Thus, though the conception of māyā, as propounded by the Ācarya, assumes sometimes a faint semblence to the same, as enunciated by the protagonists of the cosmic aspect of the Absolute, it is of less frequent occurance, and is especially so when the philosopher is dealing with the problem of diversity from the empirical point of view. The predominence of the conception

1. 1, 17, and 2, 31.
2. 3, 24.
3. 3, 27.
4. 4, 61.
5. Vide :—G. K. 3, 10.
6. 2, 19.
7. 3, 32.
8. 4. 58.

of Māyā more as illusion than as the power, producing illusion (such as conceived in the Gītā, where it is held as real and is attributed to Puruṣottama, the supreme divinity) becomes althemore manifest when we ponder over the doctrine of Ajāti, so ably established in the fourth chapter. Even the brief review we have taken is sufficient to convince one as regards the metaphysical validity of the saṁsāra in the eyes of the Ācārya. To him, the Jīvātman is not a bit more real than one perceived in the dream, or conjured up by the conjurer, or created by the force of some mantra.[1] The Ācārya is ever at pains to lay a stress on the māyika character of the universe, and so oft-repeated is his simile of the dream-objects and also of the objects of hallucination, that one often wonders whether in the eyes of the philosopher, this universe has a validity, no way better than that of the hallucinatory objects. To put it otherwise, in the philosophical scheme of the Ācārya, the line differentiating the vyāvahārika from the prātibhāsika is quite vague. The saṁsāra has got however a greater validity than that of the 'tucch' objects; for even the influence of Māyā cannot make the latter appear as existent.

Even the hurried review of the thought-content of the work is sufficient to display the scope and the extent of the influence cast on it by the Buddhist philosophy, particularly of the idealistic and the nihilistic varieties. Coming after almost all great Buddhist philosophers like Aśvaghoṣa (100 A. D.), Asaṅga (400 A.D.) and Vasubandhu (420-500 A.D.), and thoroughly conversent with the doctrines, maintained by the Yogācāras and the Mādhyamikas, and with the arguments put forward in favour of the pure subjectivism and the extreme nihilism, the Ācārya uses the line adopted by his Buddhist predecessors, and brings it in harmony with the essentially Upaniṣadic stand, that he never wavers from. The chapters on Vaitathya and Alāta--śānti betray many a similarity with the Buddhist modes of argumentation and refutation. There is a frequent occur-

1. G. K. 4, 68-70.

rence of the word 'Buddha[1]'; sometimes it is used to signify the everscient nature of the Ātman; sometimes it is meant to denote 'the wise'. At the end of the fourth chapter,[2] however the word 'Buddha' seems to denote the founder of the religious faith, known as Buddhism; and it seems to be a general reference to the Buddhist philosophy. The Buddhist influence is equally palpable in the conception of Māyā as advocated by the Ācārya. Thus, the word, samvṛti, which we have seen as having been employed by the Śūnyavādins to account for the appearance of the world, in stead of the ultimate reality, the Śūnyaṁ, is frequently used by the Ācārya as synonymous with Māyā.[3] The veiling and concealing function, attributed to samvṛti by the Buddhists, is attributed to Māyā by the Ācārya, in addition to which one more function of projection is now and then spoken of. Buddhistic conception of samvṛti and Ācārya's doctrine of Māyā have one more point in common. Both have got but an empirical validity; and so the synonymous use of the words. But a fact, and a most important one, must never be overlooked. Though having so much in common, the conceptions of samvṛti and Māyā differ from each other almost diametrically, in as much as, while the samvṛti, the cause of the hallucinatory appearance of the universe, has no substratum, the ultimate reality being void, the Māyā, the principle responsible for the appearance of the finite existence is dependent (of course, speaking from the empirical point of view) on the Ātman, the ultimate metaphysical reality. This fundamental difference of opinion over the nature of the supreme reality, that keeps the Buddhists poles apart from the Advaitins, unavoidably and undeniably influences the entire structure of their philosophical systems, and makes the Samvṛti-vāda and the Māyā-vāda so dissimilar to each other in spite of the striking similarity in modes of argumentation adopted in exposition thereof. The influence of the former over the latter is however undeniable. Indeed, just as

1. 4, 98; 4, 92; 4, 88, 4, 80.
2. 4, 99.
3. Vide : G. K. 4, 73-74; 4, 57.

the conception of Māyā, as entertained by the sparapañca-brahmavādins in the Upaniṣadic philosophy, found, under the moulding influence of the Bhāgavata religion in particular and the epic philosophy, in general, a rich and highly developed expression in the Bhagavad-Gītā, the doctrine of illusion, advocated by the protagonists of the acosmic conception of the Abolute, found, thanks to the antagonistic, yet, in a way, moulding influence of the Buddhistic idealism and nihilism, and equally rich and elaborate expression in the Kārikās of Ācarya Gauḍapāda.

## CHAPTER II

## THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTA AS DEVELOPED BY ŚANKARĀCĀRYA

The bird's eye-view of the prominent phases in the pre-Śankara evolution of the doctrine of Māyā that we have gone through, is sufficient to convince us that, like all other principal advaitic tenets, the Māyā-vāda too can claim its origin in the earliest phase of the Indian philosophy, i.e. the Upaniṣads. The critical assessment of the doctrine of Samvṛti, as advocated by the Mādhyamika Buddhists, again, reveals to us how even as early as the post-Upanisadic and the pre-system age, the subtle doctrine had evolved certain characteristics at once refined and of high speculative value. The epic philosophy, representing the same age as in the orthodox circles of thought, reflects in its own way, the doctrine, turned down no doubt into an artistic harmony with its out-look, essentially theistic. The few works of a regular advaitic type, such as the Kārikās of Ācārya Gauḍapāda that have come down to us, definitely point out that even the doctrine of Māyā along the lines of unqualified monism was considerably developed by the advaitins of pre-Śankara times. Unchallengable credit, nevertheless, goes to Śankarācārya, the greatest advaitin, who flourished about the 8th cen. A.D., as the foremost propounder of the doctrine of Māyā. Endowed with an irresistible power of logical argumentation, a deep insight into the crux of the problems, an extensive and intensive acquaintance with various schools of thought, orthodox as well as heterodox, an unshakable courage of conviction that breathes throughout his contributions, and the clear-cut, firm and systematised outlook on all the metaphysical problems, he stands out almost unequalled in the galaxy of Indian thinkers, as the greatest exponent of the Upaniṣadic truth, whose influence over the Indian thought has never waned.

So great is the influence of the philosophy propounded by Śankara, that whenever one talks of the Vedānta philosophy in general, one, in most cases, means the philosophy that was advocated by Śankara. If one has other expositions in one's mind, one has to mention the names of the exponents thereof. The high importance, accorded to the Vedānta school by other schools of thought is also mainly due to the logically sound basis the former enjoys, thanks to the unmatchable genius of Śankara.

It would be erroneous, however, to hold Śankara as the inventor of an entirely original system. What he tried to do was to interpret the original Upaniṣads, the Bhagavad-Gītā and the Brahma-Sūtras in such a way as to show the teachings conveyed therein to be in complete harmony with the Advaita Vedāntic views he favoured. Unanimously held as the highest infalliable authority, the Upaniṣads were widely claimed by various schools of thought as their basis, and Śankara's main contribution towards the advaita philosophy lies in his refutation of these various claims as baseless on one hand, and his systematic interpretation of the sacred texts in favour of his own system on the other. Adoption of this two-fold enunciation, positive and negative, necessarily led him into lively clashes with the exponents of other schools of opinion. Most prominent among them were the Mīmānsakas, who gave 'Karman' overwhelming influence above 'jñāna', the Sāṅkhyas, whose dualistic interpretation of the Upaniṣads had found widespread recognition, the Buddhists, whose philosophical deliberations had attained a singular and unique refinement, and the Naiyāyika-Vaiśeṣikas, whose realistic world-view was also widely appreciated.

The characteristic circumstances, in which Śankara expounded his doctrines, along this two-fold line of deliberations, can be safely held as responsible for the peculiar features of his philosophy. Thus he cannot be said to have formulated a philosophy of his own by logical and psychological analysis, induction and deduction. His contribution to the AV. thought

is mainly of the character of the interpretation of sacred scriptures as invariably demonstrating the nature of Brahman, an unchangeable, ever-existent Absolute. Thus always trying to secure the uncontradictable testimony of the Upaniṣads as favouring the views he held, Śankara was ever anxious, not so much to propound new doctrines or to experiment new methods, as to read the Advaitic doctrines in the Upaniṣadic preachings, and to refuse the similar claims of other parties. In some respects he can claim unchallengeable originality, no doubt, and the very fact that almost all principal tenets of AV. school of thought suddenly out-grew their vague and unsystematised appearance of pre-Śankara times, and blazed forth in distinct forms, at once convincing and not easily refutable, speaks volumes in favour of the importance of his contribution. The latter fact has made him the very fountain-head of the AV. doctrines. A historical fact that almost all pre-Śankara advaitic teachers should have been out-shone into complete oblivion by him, amply justifies such an estimate of Śankara's position among the advaitins. With Śankara, therefore, the Śabda had the greatest validity. Logic had but a subordinate place in his eyes. He resorted to the dialectical argumentation, now and then, but it was only to refute his adverseries. He did not develop his dialectics for a positive proof of his thesis. According to him, the ultimate reality, hidden behind the incessant process of finite existence, could not be convincingly grasped through logical argumentation alone. Because in his opinion mere speculation, unrestrained by the guidance of authority, would lead one nowhere.[1] Therefore, though indulging headlong into dialectical argumentation, some times his chief reliance was on the preachings conveyed by the revealed scriptures alone. And, it was with a view to discover their real purport that he exercised his reason, discrimination and judgment. Convinced that 'ultimate validity does not belong to reason but to the scriptures,' Śankara gave out, as his contribu-

1. Vide : S. B. 2, 1, 3, 11.

tion to the AV. thought, a masterly elucidation of the whole truth, as revealed in the Upaniṣads, and not some subtle system of metaphysics, orginating from himself. Even then the clarity of conception and subtlety of details, which characterise the AV. doctrines of post-Śankara period are undoubtedly due to the great powers of enunciation and exposition that Śankara brought to bear upon them. In this sense he is nothing less than the source of all the distinguishing features of the AV. thought. For a more realistic and correct appreciation of the significance of his contribution, however, we will have to take a critical note of the doctrine-contents of his works and see how far he succeeded in interpreting the authoritative texts along the Advaitic lines. It will also help us immensely in arriving at a proper assessment of the doctrine of Māyā as conceived of by him. For, though the Māyā-vāda can be reasonably traced back into far distant pre-Śankara times, it, like most of the AV. doctrines, has come to be invariably associated with Śankara and his outlook on life. Indeed, of all the AV. doctrines it is that of Māyā that is held as the most distinguishing feature of Śānkara philosophy by the moderners.

Though the philosophy of Śankara, equally concerned with the repudiation of adverse schools of thought, cannot be said to be pragmatic like that of the Upaniṣads, yet it seems rather reluctant to indulge into metaphysical disputes for their own sake. Its unmistakable trend tends towards the elucidation of the doctrine of Brahman, the ultimate reality of being; and the whole complex scheme of metaphysics revolves round it, and always tries to give a satisfactory explanation of every problem of philosophical value with a reference to it. Mere speculation on the subtleties of a metaphysical character is considered as idle by him[1].

Dealing with the problem of existence from the three levels as noumenal, empirical and phenomenal, it conceives of the first as the ground of the latter two. Ever-existent and all prevading, Brahman, the fundamental reality of being, becomes, for the

1. Vide : G. K. B. 1.

ignorant, a matter of contention, it is pointed out, wholly because of its transcendental character. Unable to rise above the snares of vyavahāra, consisting of mere names and forms, their vision cannot perceive the ultimate truth. Because, being ever devoid of all relations that tend towards the employment of words, it is ever beyond the vyavahāra,[1] beyond the range of speech.[2] Ever devoid of all attributes, of generality, of all adjuncts and of all actions, it is ever beyond the scope of all the pramāṇas.[3] For the discerning eye of the thoughtful, however, there can be no shadow of doubt. The very fact of the conditional existence of the worldly things, points out to him the truth beyond, transcending all relative values.[4] For, out of the Brahman, the ever-existent, the universe emerged into being. Had the non-being been the cause of the cosmos, the latter would have been of the character of the former. The very fact that it is actually perceived establishes its existent character; the latter in its turn, points to the same character of its cause, which is called the Brahman, the all prevading one.[5] It is omniscient, because the sacred texts attribute the creation of universe to its volition. Not that it has some ends to be achieved through the creation of the universe; because, its desires self-fulfilled, it is never motivated by baser instincts.[6] Ever anxious to point to the ultimate reality as sustaining the penultimate one, Śankara, when faced with contradictory textual statements, explains away the seemingly unavoidable contradiction by resorting to the unusual interpretation of the key-words[7]. For, he is fully convinced of the fact that as without the ground in the shape of the rope, the apparent existence of the serpent is impossible; without anything, permanent and changeless, for its ground, this apparent show of finite existence also is equally impossible. Considered from this point of view,

1. T. U. B. 2. 6.
2. Ma. U. B. 1, 7.
3. Ma. U. B. 1, 7;
4. G. K. B. 33.
5. T. U. B. 2, 6.
6. Tl U. B. 2, 6.
7. Vide; T. U. B. 2, 7;

the Brahman can be described as being actually cognized, though in the form of the universe. For, just as a piece of rope, perceived imperfectly in dim light, is itself imagined into a snake, it is the Brahman, which is of the character of pure being, pure sentience and pure bliss, which is itself construed, under the influence of misapprehension, into the saṁsāra, characterised by finite existence, imperfect sentence, and mortal joy.[1] And the Upanisads declare this eternal truth by identifying the universe, both subjective and objective, with the Absolute.[2] This all-sustaining reality is in distructible; no outside factor can change it. It does not decrease by itself or by something, pertaining to it; because increase or decrease, change or destruction imply action as their indispensible pre-requisite; and of the action, there is no possibility in the Brahman the infinite.[3] Sustaining all, it is present in every grade of cosmic life; yet it is never touched by the blemishes inhabiting it. One without second it is equal (sama) everywhere. All the differentiating factors such as virtues and vices belong to matter and not to spirit.[4] It cannot be described as either 'sat' or 'asat'; because, transcending the range of all the senses, internal as well as external, it can only be indirectly explained through the negation of the attributes, superposed thereon. Direct denotation of the noumenal reality through the words, such as sat or asat is impossible, simply because of the fact that there is neither generality, nor action, nor attribute, nor relation, through the media whereof the word can speak of it.[5] One can conceive of its existence through the attributes, superimposed thereon, no doubt; but it would be certainly erroneous not to proceed further and realise the ultimate reality, as eternally devoid thereof, contaminated by nothing else, yet sustaining the appearance of everything. Subtle like 'ākāśa', it is hardly understandable by the ignorant, and is realised as their own self by the

1. G. K. B. 2, 17.
2. U. B. 1,2.
3. B. G. B. 2, 17,
4. B. G. B. 5, 19.
5. Vide : B. G. B. 13, 12.

wise. Remote for the unwise, they being unable to grasp it even through the limitless passage of Time,—it is nearest to the wise; for, it is their own self. The greatest illuminating cosmic powers like Sun derive their effulgence from the limitless, self-effulgent Sentience that is known as Brahman.[1] Birthless, it is ever beyond littleness (kārpaṇyaṁ); because, only the thing that is characterised by finiteness, by birth and death, by limitations, can be little.[2] It is by itself beyond the range of the sense-organs or of the Intellect. Without any source, from which it can be conceived of as having been born, it does not depend either on the senses of cognizance or those of action for the fruition of its motives. Appearing under various names and forms, ranging from Brahmā down to Sthaṇu, it is just like ākāśa, one and all prevading. Devoid of all factors that cause grossness and decay, it is both subtle and changeless.[3] Though essentially devoid of form and attribute, it is always apprehended by all beings in their hearts, through the media of the attributes of the adjuncts, superposed there. It is the stay of the universe because every aspect of the latter derives its sustainance therefrom. It is both gross and subtle, and is at the same time beyond it, both visible and invisible, and also beyond it. Because, all pairs of opposites exist through its existence, they, being unreal do not affect its essential nature.[4] It is of the character of supreme bliss, which far surpasses the sparks of joy that enliven the gloom of mundane existence. Because, while the worldly joy is mortal, finite and ever-tainted by the disturbing idea of duality, the limitless Bliss is eternal, infinite and ever-free from the said notion of duality. Indeed, it is nothing else but the fraction of the limitless Bliss of the Brahman, that the beings, imagining themselves under the influence of avidyā as something mutually distinct from that ultimate reality, experience through sense-contacts.[5] It

1. B. G. B. 13; 13 To 17.
2. G. K. B. 3, 2;
3. Mu. U. B. 1, 1, 6, 6.
4. Mu. U. B. 2, 2, 1.
5. Vide: B. U. B. 4, 3, 32.

is likewise of the character of eternal knowledge. The objects of knowledge come and go; but the knowledge, which is the very essence of Brahman, which in its turn, is identical with the 'pratyagātman' of every being, is always there, effulgent in its own light. To infer complete absence of knowledge from that of the objects thereof, is to incur self-contradiction; for the absence of the objects of knowledge is the object of knowledge. And even if a state of being is assumed to be possible, where there is a complete absence of the objects of knowledge, it does not necessarily point to the complete absence of knowledge. For, does a complete absence of things, to be illuminated, necessarily mean a complete absence of the lamp, the illuminator ? Therefore, even a nihilist Mādhyamika will have to accept some eternal principle of being, which is ever-present and ever-scient, and which is the illuminator of the complete absence of vṛtti-jñāna and the objects thereof, during the state of deep sleep, the eternal principle known as Brahman in Vedānta terminology.[1] It is again limitless from point of Space (deśataḥ) like ākāśa. Yet unlike the latter, it is limitless from point of Time (Kālataḥ). Because, it is never an effect; and it is only of an effect that the span of existence is limited by Time. It is also unlimited from the point of thing (Vastutaḥ). The existence of one thing is limited by the same of another thing. But simply because there is nothing else different therefrom, the Brahman is limitless from this point of view also.[2] Thus, of the character of eternal existence, pure, sentience and immortal bliss, it is identical with the inner reality of every being, to wit, the Ātman. For, the sacred scriptures are always careful to hint at the identity of the inner and outer realities through various devices,[3] and sometimes they emphatically declare, "The Eternal Truth, ignorant whereof the being gets involved in the cycles of birth and death, and having realised which, he transcends to immortality, which is the cause

1. P. U. B. 6, 2.
2. T. U. B. 2.
3. T. U. B. 2, 1.

of the world, the stay of all finite existence beyond fear and duality, that, O Seeker, is the Brahman, thy own Ātman."[1] Ever-faithful to this Upaniṣadic doctrine of oneness of the internal and the external realities, Śankara always treats Ātman and Brahman as identical with each other; and having arrived at the former through the process of subjective analysis,[2] speaks of it, as he would have done of the latter, as self-manifest and beyond the need of proof as regards its existence,[3] or as ever-free from every type of vikriyā, such as birth, growth, decay and death, free from increase or decrease. The ancient one, that suffers no death, even when the body dies,[4] the eternal principle of being that is beyond the grasp of sense-organs, of the mind, is changeless because it is partless.[5] Complete identity between the Brahman and the Ātman, as conceived of by Śankara, becomes all the more manifest, when he, while interpreting Ācārya Gauḍapāda, declares that it is the Ātman himself, who, through his own Māyā, imagines himself into an endless diversity of finite beings, and cognizes it through his own reflection, received by Intelligence,[6] or maintains that, to the ignorant the Ātman appears as contaminated by the fruits of the adṛṣṭa; but in reality he is as free from these defects, that are superimposed on him, as the desert-place is, from water, which to the thirsty eyes appears as actually flowing in ripples.[7] According to Śankara, the ultimate reality, known as Brahman because of its all-prevading and omni-present character, and as Ātman, because of its being the fundamental essence of every living being, is one, without second. He misses no occasion to elucidate the dualistic conceptions of the ultimate truth as maintained by his opponents, and to expose, through ruthless logic, based on authoritative texts, the fallacy

1. Ch. U. B. 6, 16, 3.
2. B. G. B. 3, 42.
3. B. G. B. 2, 18.
4. B. G. B. 2, 200.
5. B. G. B. 2,25.
6. G. K. B. 2, 12.
7. G. K. B. 3, 8.

of their stands.[1] A conception of duality, according to him, in however a high and noble form it might be, is the source of fear and pain, a sure indication of the want of full realisation of the supreme reality, a remnent of the influence of avidyā.[2] Diversity does not cease to exist, after having been previously really existent. Because that is impossible. One, however, which had appeared as many, can turn out, after the removal of the doṣas, as one, which it always was. Therefore, the ultimate truth of all relative existence is the Brahman, even during the saṁsārāvasthā, and is, one without second.[3]

Having thus elucidated the ultimate reality in its transcendental and immanent aspects, Śankara condescends to the lower phase of existence, known as relative, and deals with the problems related therewith. For, to him, the metaphysical analysis and synthesis of the empirical problems have considerable value, in as much as without them it would be very difficult to point to the unity which underlies the apparent diversity.[4] Careful not to waver from his fundamental stand as regards the immanent nature of the supreme reality, Śankara spares no pain to attribute the act of creation to the Absolute, to emphasize the vyāvahārika point of view from which the attribution is made. Thus, he explains away the texts, attributing the act of self-diversification to the Ātman, at the beginning of the creation, as implying the act of differentiation of names and forms (latent during the period of pralaya) on the part of the Ātman, and nothing more.[5] Though the Ātman is essentially immanent, changeless and partless, maintains he, even the absolutist has to accept (otherwise it would be impossible to give an explanation of the world-phenomena) some distinctions, some parts therein, of course superposed thereon through the ad-

1. A. U. B. 21.
2. T. U. B. 2, 7.
3. T. U. B. 2, 8.
4. G. K. B. 3, 15.
5. Vide: T. U. B. 2, 6.

juncts, consisting of names and forms, owing their appearance to Avidyā, and hence unreal.[1] And those are these parts, superposed on the partless Brahman, which give rise to the appearance of the apparently existent saṁsāra.[2] From another point of view, the names and forms, which have in fact no independent existence of their own, yet which appear as mutually different from the Ātman, can be stated as the material (upādāna), out of which the Ātman creates the universe.[3] And, just as the character of the creater of the universe, attributed to the Ātman, has got but an empirical validity, the universe itself also has nothing better or worse than a conditional truth. For, just as the stand of the nihilists who deny any kind of validity to the world-appearance, and refuse to admit anything really existent, and sustaining the apparent existence of the former, is extremely illogical and self-contradictory,[4] that of the so-called realists, who go to the other extremity and accord full-fledged validity to the world-appearance, also is based on an imperfect assessment of reality. For, each and every aspect of cosmic appearance invariably turns out, on proper investigation, to be nothing but its constituent cause, with a particular name and in a particular form. And thus pursued in a reverse order, the entire universe resolves into nothing but Māyā or Prakṛti, appearing under various names and forms, yet fundamentally one. And it being dependent upon the Brahman for its very existence, how can the world, which is but a transformation thereof, claim a real, independent existence ?[5] The world, which presents itself as existent during the waking state, has no more validity than the one, which one experiences during the svapna; since one and the same characteristic, i.e., that of being perceptible, characterises both of them.[6] No body disputes that the objects of hallucination such as mirage, which are non-

1. P. U. B. 6, 3.
2. Cha. U.B. 6, 2, 2.
3. A. U. B. 1, 1.
4. Vide : G. K.B. 1,6.
5. B. G. 5 B. 2, 16.
6. G. K. B. 2, 4.

existent both in the beginning and the end, are also so in the intermediary stage. Then how can the thoughtful one attach more validity and reality to the things of the world, which emerge out of non-existence and return thereunto, a very brief span of dubitable existence, intervening ?[1] For, verily like the world of dreams, like the show, conjured by the conjurer, like the city of clouds, which appears in all similarity with a real one but for a moment, and melts away into nothing—is the world, declare those who have seen the truth.[2] That the diversity, which is the very essence of the world-appearance, is nothing but a creation of the vibrations of antaḥkaraṇa is conclusively pointed out, according to Śankara, by the absence of the former during the suṣupti, where the latter is dormant.[3] Indeed, just as on a rope a serpent is superimposed, so is superimposed on the Ātman, through the influence of avidyā, this diversity of finite existence.[4] It, as a matter of fact, has got no independent existence of its own. None of the innumerable aspects of world-phenomenon has got any being, apart from that of the Ātman.[5] Even the realisation of the supreme truth does not put an end to the saṁsāra, really existent up to that time. For, to transform an existent into a non-existent is an impossibility. It only awakens the realizer to the empirical validity of the world-appearance which to him had appeared before as absolute.[6] It is because of its conditional validity that the prapañca does not affect its ground, the Brahman, in the least. For, has the silver, superposed on the shell, got any power to affect the fundamental nature of the ground thereof ? It is because of the conditional validity of the world of diversity again that Śankara ignores it to such an extent as to declare that it is the Sat, the Brahman itself, which is spoken of in diverse ways and manners,[7] or resolu-

1. G. K. B. 2, 6,
2. G. K. B. 2, 31.
3. G. K.B. 2, 32.
4. G. K. B. 2, 32.
5. G. K. B. 2, 30.
6. G. K. B. 2, 17.
7. Cha. U. B. 6, 2, 3.

tely maintains that before the creation and after it, there is only one Being, birthless, decayless, fearless, deathless, ever-scient, ever-free. The distinction between two spans of Time is only one, caused by the absence and the presence of names and forms, themselves unreal, and therefore devoid of ultimate value.[1] Essentially advaitic in his out-look, Śankara accepts the doctrine of Īśvara, yet does not consider it as expressing the ultimate reality. To him, Īśvara also has got an empirical validity. Thus, in his scheme, Īśvara and Brahman do not stand on par with each other, the former being a step lower than the latter. A passing glimpse of Śankara's conception of the character, order, and function of various cosmic deities, ranging from Īśvara down to petty presiding deities, we have got in his elucidation of a mantra in the Aitareya Upanisad,[2] wherefrom he seems to conceive of Īśvara as the adjunctless, ever-pure, Absolute, turned, through the superimposition thereon of an adjunct, i.e., the Intelligence, at once purest, into a personal Being, omni-present, omni-potent, motivator of the evolution of the universe, known as antaryāmin—because of his controlling function. Though thus unable to accord ultimate validity to Īśvara, because of his advaitic stand, Śankara is fully conscious of the immense help it extends in the way of self-contemplation, and assigns the entity paramount importance in the empirical division of his metaphysical scheme. Fully impressed by the epic conception of Īśvara, Śankara conceives of Him as eternally endowed with pure knowledge, immense power and all-surpassing effulgence, as the Lord of the great cosmic powers, who though ever beyond impurity, ignorance and bondage, condescends, as a saviour of mankind, to take up a mortal form, through his inscrutable power, the Māyā.[3] He is said to be eternally and unconditionally endowed with limitless majesty, virtue, fame, wealth, non-attachment and liberation.[4]

1. A. U. B. 1, 1.
2. A. U. B. 3, 1.
3. Vide : B. G. B. Introductory passage.
4. B. G.B. 3,37.

His vision ever unveiled by the concealing power of Māyā, the world-phenomenon appears to Him in its true perspective, in all its aspects, past, present and future.[1] It is under the superintendence of Him that the Prakṛti, the ultimate material cause of the universe, evolves into the various aspect of cosmos. But those actions do not bind him; for He is ever disinterested and detached in His function.[2] A purely philosophical interpretation of the problem of the creation of universe, and the part played by Īśvara in it, Śankara gives us in his explanation of the next verse.[3] There he identifies Iśvara with the highest reality, which is of the nature of pure knowledge and is free from every change, explains the ultimate material cause of the universe, the prakṛti, as avidyā, as Māyā—heterogeneous in character, and explains the motive, working behind the evolution of it as its inherent desire for becoming an object to that pure knowledge, which is known as Īśvara, when superposed with an adjunt of Intelligence, extremely pure. Īśvara, again, is sometimes identified with the innermost self, the pratyagātman, of all beings,[4] and even with every thing, sentient or non-sentient, in the cosmic appearance, while a special emphasis is laid on the complete identity between the Īśvara and the enlightened individual soul. Thus, the knower of Truth is said to be the dearest one to Īśvara, because he is the very self of Him.[5] The distinction between the Brahman and Īśvara is brought about by the superimposition of an adjunct (Upādhikṛta), and is therefore superficial, is the stand that Śankara offers. And it becomes althemore clear, when he identifies the enlightened worshippers of the latter with the knowers of the former, and explains attainment of identity with Īśvara as the attainment of salvation,[6] or states that it is the Brahman, 'known as Vāsudeva' out of which the universe emerges into being.[7] Though from empirical

1. B. G. B. 4,5.
2. B. G. B. 9, 9.
3. B. G. B. 9, 10.
4. Vide : B. G. B. 4, 35.
5. B. G. B. 6,30.
6. B. G. B. 4,10.
7. B. G. B. 10,8.

point of view, Īśvara is the creater of the scheme of four castes, yet in truth, He is non-doer, is immortal and eternally free from the blemishes of the saṁsāra.[1] It is indeed due to the veiling influence of the guṇas that the beings do not realise Him, the lord of all, the ever-enlightened one, who, through his inscrutable power, can burn down the seeds, the doṣas, of saṁsāra[2] in His transcendental nature, is beyond the grasp of all senses, and pervades each and every thing. It is in the transcendental nature of Īśvara that everything in the world subsists and exists. Though thus a stay of all, He himself stays in none of them[3]. To sum up, though the conception of Īśvara, as propounded by Śankara clearly betrays considerable influence cast on it by the epic philosophy and religion, yet essentially it is in complete harmony with the general advaitic outlook of his philosophy, in as much as while he does not hesitate to accept him as the lord of universe, he flatly refuses to recognize him, as Dvaitins would have him, as the ultimate metaphysical truth. In his view, however, the distinction between the Brahman, the absolute reality, and Īśvara, the highest empirical reality, is based on the avidyā, is hence unreal and superficial; and that can be the only explaination of his apparently incoherent, yet fundamentally consistent, treatment of the doctrine.

A strikingly similar explanation is offered by the monistic philosophy of Śankara as regards the essential nature of the Jīvātman too. Jīvātman is also nothing but the Ātman conditioned by a subtle body, known as 'liṅga-deha'. Jīva is thus said to be the reflection of the supreme deity, i.e., the Brahman, received by Intelligence, because of the sattva predominating in it. And the reason behind this inexplicable phenomenon is maintained to be ignorance about the real nature of that supreme deity.[5] With a view to explain the relative position of Jīvātman

1. B.G.B. 5, 13.
2. B.G.B.
3. B.G.B. 7, 13.
4. B.G.B. 9,4.
5. Vide : Cha. U. B. 6, 32.

and Ātman, Śankara often resorts to the dṛṣṭānta of ghatākāśa and ākāśa, and maintains that just like it, the diversity of the Jīvātmans also owes its rise and existence to the diversity of the adjuncts (which are, in the present case, the subtle bodies), superposed on the Ātman, one without second.[1] Distinction between the Jīvātman and Ātman, though actually felt during the empirical stage, cannot be real, simply because the former cannot be held, logically and authoritatively, as the transformation (vikāra), or the part (avayava) of the latter, which the scriptures declare to be changeless and partless.[2] The distinction has got but a conditional validity and an empirical truth; and so are all the numerous activities, based thereon, including the bondage and the liberation themselves.[3] Śankara however utters a word of caution least one would suppose that according to the advaitin, Jīvātman is utterly false (atyantāsat), and states in emphatic terms that he accepts, not only in the things empirical, but also in those phenomenal, in innermost core of uncontradictable truth which fundamentally differentiates them from the things, eternally non-existent,—things, like a barren woman's son.[4] Taken by themselves, however, they are unreal. Same is the case with the Jīva too. In B. G. B., Śankara, compelled to fall in line with the general trend of the text, which is definitely tending towards dualism, elucidates the nature of Jīvātman as the higher Prakṛti, known as Kṣetrajña,—an entity, which, having entered the world, sustains it.[5] Yet, the fundamental conception as regards the true nature of the Jīvātman, remains one and the same in whatever way and mode it might have been elucidated. Thus, Śankara misses no opportunity to stress that the Kṣetrajña is eternally untouched by the blemishes like pain, desire etc., which really belong to antaḥkaraṇa, and which only seem to inhabit the former through

1. G. K. B. 3,6.
2. G. K. B. 3, 7.
3. G. K. B. 3, 5.
4. Vide : Cha. U. B. 6,3,2.
5. B. G. B. 7, 5.

avidyā,[1] or to explain that the texts, describing the Jīva as the aṁśa of the Īśvara, should not be taken at face-value, for that would ultimately lead to logical incongruity, but should be taken as implying that 'the Ātman, though partless, yet appears, due to the superimposition of the adjuncts, the antaḥkaraṇas, thereupon, as endowed with parts; and each part, thus apprently existent, is called as Jīva; it, however, in reality is one with the Ātman'.[2] He explains in details the fundamental identity of the Kṣetrajña with Īśvara, and of the both with the Brahman, the ultimate reality, emphasising now and then, that the character of 'doer' or 'experiencer' which to the ignorant seems to be the essential nature of the Kṣetrajña, belongs, in reality, to the Kṣetra (i.e. the subtle body), and appears as inhabiting the former through 'adhyāsa.' Even the avidyā, according to Śankara, which is the cause of all pain and sorrow, does not belong to the Kṣetrjña. 'For, just as the ocular defects, impairing and distorting vision, belong, not to the beholder himself, but to the ocular imstrument, maintains he, the avidyā, that baffles the power of apprehension either by veiling the truth or by conjuring up various distortations thereof, or by giving rise to doubts, belongs, not to the Kṣetrajña, but to the antaḥkaraṇa. Because, it, in its three-fold activity, is actually cognized by him; and what is 'known' cannot be identical with the 'knower'. It is only superposed on him; as such, it cannot affect his fundamental nature, which is of complete identity with the eternal and changeless Brahman[3]. Those who maintain that the individual soul is the 'Kārya' of Īśvara, and is hence really fettered by the shackles of saṁsāra, come into flat contradiction of the texts, which clearly state that in the beginning of creation, the immortal one, having created the universe, entered into it in the form of Jīva', and thus endorse the complete identity between Ātman and Jīvātman, conveyed by the great aphorism

1. B. G.B. 13, 2.
2. B. G. B. 15, 7;
3. Vide : B. G. B. 13, 2.

'Tat Tvaṁ Asi'[1]. It is for this reason that Śankara is always careful to explain away the scriptural texts tending towards dvaitic outlook,[2] as dwelling upon the distinction between the individual souls and the ultimate truth of being, brought about by the adjuncts, superposed on the latter, hence unreal and superficical,—only to be negated later on. Such texts dwell, according to him, on the distinction, in accordance with the adhyāropavāda method of elucidation.

This brief view of the conceptions of Īśvara and Jīvātmansas propounded by Śankara might have brought to the notice of the reader the uncompromisingly emphatic note of monism that pervades his entire philosophical outlook. Every problem of metaphysical significance is almost unerringly approached from advaitic point of view and even the doctrine of Māyā, Śankara's another equally important and significant contribution to Indian thought, is not without any influence, cast on it by this staunch advaitism. Monism in Śankara becomes althemore clear, when he, while interpreting Ācārya Gauḍapāda, emphatically dismisses diversity which is the very essence of saṁsāra, as eternally devoid of truth in its apparent or fundamental aspect.[3] He declares that the scriptural texts enunciating dualistic conception, necessarily pale into a secondary position when confronted with those, denying diversity, in as much as while the former are pronounced mainly in accordance with the tendency to see diversity in stead of unity,—a tendency, which is inherent in every being, labouring under avidyā, the latter carry the highest import of supreme realisation, reached through transcendental knowledge[4]. He repudiates the Brahmapariṇāma-vāda as illogical and self-contradictory and states that the partless, changeless Brahman can never undergo any actual transformation, because it is simply impossible. It may seem however as having become many through Māyā[5]. A clear view of Śankara's monism,

1. T. U. B. 3, 10.
2. Mu. U. 8, 2,'1.
3. G. K. B. 234.
4. G. K. B. 3,14.
5. G. K. B. 3, 19,

we have in the passage, referred to above, wherein, he, having stated his conception of ultimate reality in clear-cut words, traces the same through not only various deities of differing ranks, powers and functions—such as Īśvara, Hiraṇyagarbha, Virāṭ or Agni but also innumerable individual souls, going through various stages of evolution, and states in the end that it is the One and the One alone, that is fancied by the ignorant into diversity. In his Bhāṣya on Bṛhadāraṇyaka, again, we come across an interesting discussion,[1] wherein he exposes to the full the illogical character of the position of the Dvaita-vādins, who, relying wholly upon some scriptural texts, propound the relation betweeen the Jīvātman and the Ātman, as not that of complete identity, but one of the part and the whole. He ridicules at length the idea that the Ātman is endowed with parts (each Jīvātman being a part of him), warns the uncritical adherents to the textual authorities to think twice before according a meaning to them, which goes in flat contradiction of common sense. He concludes that what the teachings like "Yathā sudīptāt pāvakāt visphulinṅgāh"[2] tend to emphasise, is, not the relation of part and whole, —as existent between Jīvātman and Ātmans but thee ssential unity of the two. Absence of diversity a unconditional truth can be conclusively inferred from a universal phenomenon of everyday occurrence, opines Śankara. No body ever disputes that no diversity is perceived during the state of deep sleep. Now, had it been an absolute reality, it would necessarily have been present even during that state, as does the self of the individual; the very fact that as soon as the mind gets submerged in the state of deep sleep, or is controlled in the state of indeterminate samādhi, diversity is nowhere to be perceived, points to the fact that it is but mind's creation, and has thus but a conditional existence[3]. He again points out that the assumption of the Sāṃkhyas that the puruṣas are essentially many, is without any sound basis. He further points out at length how

1. B. U. B. 2,1.
2. Vide : M. U. 2,1.
3. G. K. B. 3, 31.

even the entire scheme of philosophy, as enunciated by them, cannot be said as necessitating the acceptance of the doctrine of plurality of puruṣas[1]. The problem of the absence of the diversity during the state of deep sleep and its inevitable implications receives an equally close elucidation in another passage in B. U. B.[2], where he emphatically declares that it is only due to the influence of avidyā that one perceives diversity instead of unity during the waking and dreaming states. It is avidyā, active during these states, which is solely responsible, for the appearance of diversity. No wonder then if Śankara with such uncompromising advaitic outlook, should consider that the immediate realisation of the eternal, essential and fundamental unity of being, oneness of eternal existence, prevading all prapañca in its innumerable aspects, sentient and non-sentient, alone constitutes the knowledge of transcendental truth. None who has failed to wake up to this unity of spirit, sustaining apparent diversity, none, labouring under the fatal influence of dualism, in however a noble form it might be conceived, can ever hope to attain final beautitude, he emphatically maintains. With Śankara, to whom the entities o Īśvara, Jīva and inanimate universe, both in its original and evolved form, have but a conditional validity and an empirical existence, the bondage, the ajñāna, the cause of bondage, and the final liberation therefrom also have got but a vyāvahārika value. He severely criticizes[3] those who believe in reality of bondage and salvation, as committing a mistake of gross absurdity and points out in details that to conceive of the bondage as a beginningless truth is to accept its endless existence, and to propound the doctrine of salvation as a truth, characterised by a beginning, is to propound its limited existence. For, a reality, endowed with beginninglessness, is necessarily endless; and nothing, which has a beginning can ever be without an end. If the prapañca is an unconditional reality, even the realisation of the supreme truth will not be

1. G. K. B. 3,5.
2. B. U. B. 4, 3, 31 and 32.
3. G. K. B. 4,30.

able to put an end to it. For, none what-so-ever can turn an existent into a non-existent. Besides this, the first Jīvātman to realise the true self would have long ago put an end to the saṁsāra, and we would not have been here, seeking every one in his own way, a means of liberation therefrom[1]. It is for this very reason that Śankara, while explaining the texts, such as—'Brahmavid āpnoti paraṁ, Satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ Brahma', tells us that the mantra should not be taken as declaring the attainment of Brahma-hood something different from, and unattained by him, on the part of the seeker; for it is simply illogical; what the mantra wants to convey is that the Jīva, who is always identical with Brahman, yet who has shomehow or other forgotten this, only recognizes this fundamental identity, on being instructed to that effect by the Śrutis, and after having completed the course of self-contemplation, leading to the immedite realisation thereof. Thus, what is discovered, is said to be achieved.[2] Thus, what even the Śrutis aim is to help the seeker, not to achieve something unachieved before, or to transform himself into something else, truer and nobler, or to secure final liberation from the real fetters of samsāra, but to cast away the influence of avidyā labouring under which he has forgotten his real self, and has come to behold diversity in stead of unity.[3]

Ever anxious to lay empahsis on the conditional truth of empirical being, and always careful to draw one's attention to the ground thereof, Śankara conceives, as an example, of a yet lower state of existence, known as prātibhāsika, in contrast with the higher two, the vyāvahārika and the pārmārthika. By means of constant references to this lowest stratum of reality, he meets many an objection from his adverseries, and exposes to the full the māyika character of empirical universe. Though the doctrine of apparent existence like almost all advaitic doctrines cannot claim originality at the hands of this illustrious philo-

1. B. S. S. B. 3, 2, 5, 21.
2. Vide T. U. B. 2,1;
3. B. U. B. 1,4,10;

sopher,—it also, like other principles, appears in the earlier phases of the advaitic thought—yet here it has undergone, like other advaitic doctrines, remarkable development and clarification. Hardly interested in the metaphysical disputations of a purely academical character, however, Śankara seldom indulges into a minute enquiry as regards the causes leading to the phenomenal existence, the exact nature of its validity, or the points where the empirical existence should be, from an ontological point of view. For, the main object he constantly keeps before him while propounding his views, is not to present a complete, complex and highly rational philosophy of his own, but to interpret the revealed scriptures, the highest authority on the realm of Indian philosophy, in such a way as to present them as the uncontradictable source of the advaitic school of thought. As is but natural, the positivistic and pragmatic tone of the Upaniṣads is still audible in the explanations Śankara furnishes them with, and does hardly permit discussions of purely speculative character. Therefore, nothing can be positively ascertained as regards the stand that Śankara has to offer over a problem, that came to attract a good deal of attention of the advaitic philosophers of subsequent times. He does not make it clear whether in his view the world of jāgrat state fundamentally enjoys a greater validity and truth than that of svapna and hallucination. Scattered throughout his vast literature are the indications that point both the ways. For, whereas the three-fold division of existence tends to give each and every one of them its own individualistic character, so complete, oft-repeated and emphatic is the employment of the simile of phenomenal objects in order to clarify the flimsy character of the empirical objects, that one is often led to think that to Śankara the line dividing the phenomenal from the empirical objects is superficial. How this problem came to exert considerable influence over the post-Śankara evolution of the doctrine of Māyā will become clearer in the succeeding chapters. Śankara's position in this connection, is, however, vague. His subtle elucidation of the doctrine of

ajāti furnishes us with a powerful indication that according to him the world of empritical validity did not enjoy much more truth of being than that of phenomenal one. In his masterly exposition of Ajāti-vāda, he prominently displays his dialectical skill by bringing two opposite schools to a headlong clash, repudiating each of them from the other's point of view, not getting involved in their quarrel and thus securing an easy and smooth victory for his own principles.[1] Most of the arguments put forward by Śankara, are already hinted at in his Kārikās by Ācārya Gauḍapāda, no doubt; yet here they are presented with much more elaboration of theme and clarity of conception. Thus, he describes at length different types of nature (prakṛti), all falling within the category of empirical validity, explains how all of them are above change by themselves and maintains that if even the things of conditional truth cannot forsake their nature and become something else, how much more so must have been the case with that eternal entity, Brahman, endowed with an immortal and changeless character.[2] According to him, the claim of the Brahma-pariṇāma-vādins, who view the eternal, all-pervading entity as immortal and maintain at the same time that the prapañca is a real transformation (pariṇāma) of it, is ridiculously self-contradictory. For, nothing that undergoes a change can ever be immortal. In support of his doctrine of ajāti, he dwells upon the theories of causation, advocated by the Sāṅkhyas and the Naiyāyikas, exposes to the full the defects inherent therein, and concludes that since the non-existent cannot come into existence,—as the Asat-kāryavādins would have it, or the existent come into being, as the Sat-kāryavādins maintain, there can be no phenomenon like 'coming into being' (jāti). The incessant process of becoming and non-becoming, otherwise known as saṁsāra, is not a bit better than a hallucination, apparent yet inexplicable, indefensible and illogical. He exposes to the full the fallacy of

1. Vides :—G. K. B. 4, 3 To 5.
2. G. K. B. 9.

'regressus ad infinitum', that is inherent in the stand of those who maintain both adṛṣṭa and body with all its accessories of an individual being as nutually inter-determined and thus try to make every one responsible for his own good or bad. The law of causation, held by the realists as the factor working behind the world-phenomenon, is, according to the advaitin, but a fiction, unable to stand critical investigation[1], and the moment its fictitious character is exposed through ruthless logic, the whole edifice of world-appearance, sustained thereby, resolves into a creation of disturbed manas. In his attempts to reject extra-mental existence of the world in all its aspects, he joins ranks with the Vijñāna-vādin, puts forth in details all possible arguments that the party to-be-refuted might conceive of in favour of its stand, and then shows how even the diverse character of consciousness (prajñapti) cannot conclusively point out the real existence of external things. Perception of the external objects, as mutually different from the self of the perceiver, Śankara traces to the influence of misapprehension (bhrānti). He notes, by way of justification of his stand, that wherever the influence is inactive as during the state of deep sleep, or is controlled as in the state of nirvikalpaka samādhi, or is rooted out by the realisation of ultimate truth as in the case of the enlightened one, diversity of things, either internal or external, is nowhere to be perceived.[2] Having however thus rejected the extra-mental existence of the world by adopting the subjectivistic stand of the Vijñāna-vādin, Śankara turns his guns against the latter too, and explodes his fundamental tenets also with equal zest. The doctrine of ajāti is equally uncontradictable, maintains he, in the case of the citta also. As the objects of citta cannot be said to be coming into existence, the citta itself cannot be conceived of as being born. And, the stand of all Buddhist thinkers, with whom the citta is an incessant chain of momentary beings of consciousness, is a drastic

1. Vide :—G. K. B. 4, 14 To 21.
2. G. K. B. 4, 24 To 27.

contrast with this fundamental truth. He again ridicules the Buddhist view of the citta, and extends his attack up to the Śūnyavādins, who boldly deny the existence of even their own self, the perceiver of the non-existence of every thing, other from him.[1]

It is not necessary to give here in details all the arguments put forward by Śankara in favour of his doctrine of ajāti; for, we have already come to know the general outline of the discussion, while taking an appreciative note of the advaitic view of Gauḍapāda, whom the former fairly follows in technique and doctrine. For, let us not forget that Śankara's contribution to advaitic thought mainly consists of elaboration of the older views claiming hoary antiquity, and not of propagation of new doctrines. And the partial view of his stand as regards the problem of jāti we have gone through, is sufficient to convince us that according to him, nothing is ever-born, the ajāti is the only truth, and wherever there are statements in earlier advaitic texts that might be pointing to the contrary, they are to be explained away as explaining the mystery of existence not from transcendental but from empirical point of view[2]. It is a wrong belief in the absolute validity of the chain of Karman and phala that keeps the cycle of birth, growth, decay and death ever-rotating. For those who enjoy the capacity to view the world-appearance from transcendental stand, however, saṁsāra is simply as good as non-existent. The only reality beyond sublation for them is the Ātman, which, though birthless, appears as being born; though actionless, appears incessantly active; though attributeless, appears as endowed with various attributes. For them the Ātman is the ground against which the notions of generality, action, attribute etc., which are themselves 'asat', and which cognize the particular things that are 'asat', appear as though 'sat'[3]. The infinite, changeless, vijñāna looks through Māyā as though vibrating; and it is this vibration

1. Vide :—G. K. B. 4, 28.
2. G. K. B. 4, 42.
3. Vide :—G. K. B. 4, 45.

of the vijñāna, unreal in itself, that is imagined by the ignorant into the triputī of knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge, mutually different from each other.[1] Even the revealed scriptures, which expose the apparent truth of finite being, have no ultimate validity, and so the descriptions of the essential nature of ultimate reality as birthless, changeless etc. are good only from an empirical stand. The only true description of Brahman is Silence[2].

The brief appreciative note of the main aspects of the philosophy of Śankara that deals with the problem of existence from three levels, transcendental, empirical and phenomenal, and places an unmistakable emphasis on the first as being of ultimate value, would remain rather incomplete without an objective appreciation of his doctrine of Māyā. For, one of the most fundamental facts of advaitic thought, the conception of Māyā, wields an undeniable influence over all other aspects of monistic philosophy that Śankara propounds, and is, in its turn, influenced by them. It is this mutual determination and interdependence that characterize the prominent principles of the non-dualistic thought, which had induced us to take a bird's-eye-view of the general features of Śankara's philosophy before taking up an objective study of his conception of Māyā, with its pre-Vācaspati development. What we have said as regards 'Śankara's contribution towards other advaitic doctrines holds good in the case of the principle of Māyā too. Here too, he can hardly claim any fresh originality of conception. For, we have already seen in the preceding chapter, how far the doctrine of Māyā, the most distinguishing feature of advaitic thought, can be traced in the pre-Śankara phases of Indian thought, both orthodox and heterodox. Indeed, the earliest beginnings of the doctrine of Māyā, of course vague and shadowy, can be traced back to the RV. hymns themselves[3], where the word Māyā has been used in the sense of supernatural

1. G. K. B. 4, 47.
2. G. K. B. 4, 74.
3. Vide :—R. V. 6, 47, 18.

power and wonderful skill,—a meaning that never faded into oblivion even in the succeeding times. We have already seen that the doctrine of Māyā in its essentially advaitic implications has not been unknown to the Upaniṣadic seers. Of course the word itself is of rare occurrence. It is employed, to be more specific, in the Bṛhadāraynaka[1], in the Praśna[2] and twice in the Śvetāśvatara[3]. Yet it has not as yet acquired the essentially Vedāntic meaning that characterised it later on. The idea of inherent mystery that lay beneath the usage of the word in Ṛgvedic times, came to be gradually emphasised in later Vedic periods; and it is in the sense, more or less akin to magic, which claims its origin to the Atharva Veda, that the word occurs in the Upaniṣadic texts referred to above. Besides this, we come across a more frequent usage of the word avidyā, generally used as synonymous with that of Māyā by the Upaniṣadic philosophers. Coming down to post-Upaniṣadic and pre-system age, we have seen how the conception of Māyā outgrew, gradually and slowly, its Vedic vagueness and assumed metaphysical implications; in the circles of herterodox thought, it was employed in the sense of magic at first, and came with development of philosophical thought to denote 'illusion'. In the circles of orthodox thought, on the other hand, improving upon the sense of magical power ascribed to it in Upaniṣadic times, it came to denote, under the influence of Bhāgavata religion, as we have seen while studying the Māyā-vāda as presented in the Bhagavad-Gītā, the divine power of the Puruṣottama, the epic version of the Upaniṣadic Absolute. Most of the advaitic works belonging to the epic age are no more available to us. Yet the frequent references to various ācāryas which one comes across in the still extant works such as the Brahma-Sūtras surely indicate that even during these times, surcharged with theistic tendencies, the current of unqualified monism did not lack much either in bulk or force. So the development of Māyā doctrine

1. B. U. 2, 5, 19.
2. P. U. 1, 16.
3. Sve. U. 4, 10 and 1, 3.

on advaitic lines in the pre-Śankara period is also beyond doubt, and we have the most authoritative example in the Kārikās of Ācārya Gauḍapāda. Thus, Śankara can be hardly held as the first propounder of the doctrine of Māyā, either in its general or in its specific form. Yet, as we have remarked in the beginning of the chapter, such has been the skill he has exhibited in synthesising and co-ordinating the different currents of the Māyā doctrine, or the clarity of conception he has endowed upon the doctrine, vague up to that time, or the elaboration of theme he has presented the doctrine with, that he has been indeed looked upon as the promulgator thereof. This will become clearer however on an objective analysis and a synthatical appreciation of the Māyā-vāda, as presented by him. This too, can be done from the three levels of approach,—transcendental, empirical, and phenomenal. Taking the last first, Śankara seems to employ the word in one of its earliest meanings i.e. the magic power. In his commentary on Kārikās of Gauḍapāda[1], he explains at length the even-now-famous Indian rope-trick, and the pointed employment of the words 'Māyā' and 'Māyāvī', clearly shows that even the metaphysical implication ascribed to the word has not rendered its Atharva Vedic meaning of magic obselete. Though employed in the sense of the cause of the hallucinatory appearances, it is generally used in such cases where the person, exercising the power of magic, is different from the spectator deluded thereby. Thus, while the phenomenal appearance of the rope, standing erect in the air, is attributed to the 'māyā' of the magician, that of silver in stead of conch-shell in bright moon-shine, or that of a serpent in stead of a piece of rope, is attributed, generally speaking, to avidyā or ignorance of the perceptor himself. Of course, disinterested in the ontological invesigation into the essential character of phenomenal objects, for its own sake, Śankara cannot be expected to have clearly drawn and always maintained such a fine line of distinction between the categories

1. Vide :—G. K. B. 1, 7.

of the objects of phenomenal validity, even then there are sure indications, here and there, which indicate that even to Śankara such a differentiation was not unknown. Though not significant in itself, this point is remarkable in as much as it reflects, as it were, the line of differentiation, maintained generally by Śankara and unwaveringly by the later advaitic philosophers, between the character and the scope of māyā and avidyā, on the empirical plane. All of the varied aspects of the doctrine of Māyā, which we have seen as flourishing in pre-Śankara times, are reflected in his conception of the principles; and the word is used with different implications for different contexts. The conception of Māyā as the power of supreme divinity, the Lord of all beings, the origin whereof we have traced back to the epic phase of pre-Śankara Vedāntic thought, finds a fuller elaboration at the hands of Śankara, when he explains 'māyā' as the power of the supreme 'triguṇātmikāṁ vaiśṇavīṁ svāṁ māyāṁ mūlaprakṛtiṁ.[1] The influence of the Śānkhya doctrine of traiguṇya is palpable in the first epithet, while that of the Bhāgavata religion in the second. Conception of Māyā as the power of Puruṣottama, responsible for the appearance of world-phenomenon is again made clearer, when the māyā is stated[2] as exercising full control over entire universe and veiling from it the external reality of being i.e. Puruṣottama, or when, after having been attributed to the supreme divinity as his own, it is said[3] to be very difficult to be overcome (duratyayā), and the only way to overcome it is to seek refuge in the Lord. Īśvara is characterised here as the Māyāvī or one who exercises the power of delusion, his māyā as the power of magic and the individual soul as a deluded spectator thereof. According to Śankara, Māyā, the divine power of world-illusion, is nothing[4] but coordination (yuktiḥ=ghaṭanaṁ) of the three guṇas, sattva, rajas and tamas. It envelopes, as it were, the eternal truth of being

1. Vide :—B. G. B. Introductory passage.
2. B. G. B. 4, 6.
3. B. G. B. 7, 14.
4. Vide :—B. G. B. 7, 25.

and it is due to its veiling function, it is maintained, that the ignorant fail to perceive the latter. Śaṅkara however is always anxious to state that just as the magical power, while deluding the vision of the spectators gathered around, has no influence over the vision of the employer thereof; the māyā that veils the ultimate truth, and conjures up the show of finite existences, infinite in number, in its stead, has no power and influence over Īśvara, who exercises it. The eternal realisation of fundamental reality of being is never veiled from Īśvara by the māyā, his own power of producing world-phenomena. In another place[1], Śankara openly interprets the word prakṛti as synonymous with Māyā, quotes a Vedic statement in favour of his interpretation, and maintains that it evolves out in the form of universe beginning with the entity of Intelligence. Side by side with this conception of Māyā as the divine power of the Puruṣottama, by the exercise whereof the world-phenomena come into semblance of being, is to be found another current of thought, essentially more advaitic than the former. Here the māyā, the cause of saṁsāra, is conceived of as a power, as a 'Śakti', not of Īśvara but of the Ātman, endowed with great māyā (mahāmāyaḥ); it is the Ātman, the omniscient, the omnipotent one, maintains Śaṅkara, that transforms his own self into the universe, (apparently different from his real self.)[2] That the māyā does not belong to some one else mutually different from the deluded thereby, is plainly hinted at by Śankara, while explaining a mantra in the Kaṭhopaniṣad[3]. Here, having described at length the evil influence of Māyā, he sadly wonders 'how all these beings go on revolving through cycles of birth, growth, decay and death, ever unable to perceive their own real self, ever labouring under the deluding influence of Māyā, as though spell-bound by some one else. This again is made explicite clear by him in his explanation of G. K.[4]. Here all types of superimposition upon the eternal,

1. B. G. B. 13, 29.
2. A. U. B. 1, 1.
3. Vide :—Ka. U. B. 1, 3, 12.
4. G. K. B. 2, 19.

transcendental reality, one without second, he attributes to the conjuring influence of Māyā, dependent upon the Ātman, whom it tries to veil, and seems to the ignorant to have fairly suceeded in it. It is through his own māyā, maintains Śankara, at another place [1], that the Ātman, the divine one, fancies his own self into apparent infinite diversity and perceives it as such. The conception of Māyā as the Śakti of Ātman has many a point in similarity with the conception of avidyā. For, while the māyā, viewed as the divine power of the supreme divinity, Puruṣottama, is seldom explained as avidyā. The same, considered as power dependent upon the Ātman, is now and then enunciated as identical with avidyā. The aggregates such as body etc., put forth by the māyā of Ātman i.e., avidyā, have, just like the aggregates conjured up by a conjurer, no real existance", says Śankara.[2] This leads one to the problem of conception of avidyā in the scheme of Śankara's philosophy. Though our illustrious philosopher does not always care to maintain a clear line of distinction between the conceptions of avidyā and māyā, he, nevertheless, conceives of the cause of saṁsāra with all its pains and sorrows, as avidyā when considered in context of Jīvātman, and as māyā, when viewed in relation with Ātman or Paramātman. With the Upaniṣads primarily concerned with the explanation of the riddle of existence from an individual's point of view, the conception of avidyā naturally enjoys more familiarity than māyā, which is of a more comprehensive character. The conception of avidyā, as displayed in Śankara's scheme of philosophy, retains almost all the characteristics of Upaniṣadic antiquity. It is thus said to be of the character of perception of diversity in stead of unity, as ultimate reality and is likened to a dark night [3]. It is not merely a negation of vidyā or wisdom; but it is its opposite, positive in character, and endowed with a veiling and conjuring influence. The fluid position of the conception of Avidyā, now identified with Māyā, now treated as sepa-

1. G. K. B. 2, 12.
2. G. K. B. 3, 10.
3. Vide :—B. G. B. 2, 69.

rate, becomes althemore clear when in one and the same passage[1] avidyā is explained as both prakṛti and the state of misidentification with prakṛti on the part of the Puruṣa. In whatever way might have been the conception of avidyā enunciated (and an attempt to synthesize different currents of thought seems to have been responsible for this variety of ways of enunciation), it has some characteristics, that are never lost sight of. Its locus is the antaḥkaraṇa of the individual being; and a more pronounced emphasis is felt to be on its veiling than on conjuring function, though appearance of diversity of finite beings is also attributed to it[2]. It is thus maintained that it is due to the darkening influence of avidyā that one, unconscious of one's eternal and fundamental identity with supreme Brahman, superimposes upon his own self which is infinite and immortal, finite and mortal selves such as annamaya (the one, nourished by food) etc., and that this fateful influence of avidyā can be dispelled only through resorting to its opposite i.e. (vidyā)[3]. According to Śankara, who is an ardent advocate of unconditional unity of Jīvātman, Paramātman and Ātman, the locus of avidyā, is, as said above, the antaḥkaraṇa, and not the Kṣetrajña, or the knower thereof. Avidyā, consisting of the three guṇas, with tamas dominating over the other two, cannot be the attribute (dharma) of the Kṣetrajña; for the latter is, maintains Śankara, eternally free from all the guṇas. Besides this, avidyā which exerts its influence either by concealing the reality, or by causing a misaprehension of it, or by giving birth to various doubts as regards the true nature thereof,—a three-fold activity, in which it resembles darkness—must have been something else than an attribute of Kṣetrajña. Had it been otherwise, it would have been identical with Kṣetrajña. For, a substance and an attribute thereof are always identical with one another. And had it been identical with the

1. B. G. B. 13, 21.
2. Ka. U. B. 2, 1, 11.
3. T. U. B. 2, 8.

Kṣetrajña, it would never have been perceived by him. For, what is a subject can never be an object. A subject can nev er perceive itself. The very fact that it is actually cognised in its three-fold activity, indicates that avidyā is not identical with the cognizer, but is merely an attribute of an internal instrument, through which the Kṣetrajña cognizes the everchanging modes of knowledge (vṛtti-jñāna). Just like other attributes of the antaḥkaraṇa, it also is superimposed, on the Kṣetrajña, and hence the cognition—'I know not.' But having been merely superimposed, it cannot affect the eternal nature of the Kṣetrajña, which is of pure knowledge, changeless existence and immortal joy. It is for this reason that to the query—'Then to whom it doth belong', Śankara returns a significant answer: 'To him by whom it is perceived"[1]. For, even the act of cognition necessarily implying a vikriyā cannot belong to Ātman or Kṣetrajña. He is essentially infinite and hence eternally free from every type of vikriyā. Nor can it be attributed to mere antaḥkaraṇa; for, a transformation of māyā or prakṛti or avidyā, it is by its very constitution, non-sentient (jaḍa), and hence incapable of cognition. It is the antaḥkaraṇa, the advaitin argues, illuminated by the eternal, self-luminous glow of pure sentience (caitanya-udbhāsita), known as Ātman or Brahman, and as Kṣetrajña in this specific connection, that perceives and cognizes various modes of knowledge. Produced by avidyā, it is also the seat thereof. The discussion that follows the said answer is an excellent example of casuistry and wrangling that Śankara seldom indulges into, with an only view to expose the weak points in the stand of the opponents.

So overlapping each other indeed are the conceptions of māyā, avidyā and prakṛti in the philosophical scheme of Śankara, that while at one place, avidyā is used as synonymous with māyā, at another[2] it is held as the cause thereof

1. Vide :—B. G. B. 13, 2.
2. G. K. B. 1, 6.

(note the word—"avidyākṛta-māyā)". Always maintained as the principle, under the influence whereof the one appears as many[1], Māyā, again, is explained as equivalent to not only avidyā and prakṛti[2], but also to svabhāva or nature.[3] The reason behind this apparent confusion of various conceptions, and the apparent disregard for the subtle metaphysical distinctions characterising each and every one of them, is not however far to seek. In his attempts to provide his favourite school of thought with the highest authoritative back-ground, i. e., the Upaniṣads, the Brahma-Sūtras and the Gītā, Śankara had, not only to endow the vague and unsystematised Vedāntic thoughts, contained therein, with a metaphysical clarity of conception and systematic elaboration, but also to encounter non-vedāntic elements, occurring here and there, and explain them into harmony with the Vedāntic outlook. This naturally led to the co-usage of the terms, which had different meanings with different schools of thought. These, however, according to Śankara, denoted (when occurring in the revealed texts at least) one and the same entity, adopted by the Vedānta system. Thus in his view, the terms—māyā, avidyā, prakṛti, svabhāva, denote, one and all of them, the transformatory material cause of saṁsāra; or the words Brahman, Sat, Ātman, Akṣara, Puruṣa mean the ultimate reality of being. Not that in his eyes the conceptions of Māyā, avidyā or prakrti were identical with each other completely and on all points. It will be a truer appreciation of his stand, I feel, if one were to say in stead that according to him all these terms denoted one and the same entity, each one of them having, however, its own implication arising out of the particular angle from which the approach towards the entity in question has been made, and the context in which it is spoken of. Though not unconscious of these metaphysical subtlties, Śankara was, however, more interested in ontological investigation. He, therefore, often overlooked them and hence this 'confusion of various

1. G. K. B. 3, 19.
2. B. G. B. 9, 10.
3. B. G. B. 5, 14.

conceptions'. Nor is there any fundamental difference between the essential fundamentals of avidyā, māyā, prakṛti, or svabhāva, as conceived of by Śankara,—a difference, that would render his treating all these as one and the same entity ill-based. Hence his constant identification of māyā with prakṛti or avidyā. According to him, it is the māyā-śakti of Īśvara that evolves out in the form of the eight-fold diversity, consisting of the 'avyakta with avidyā', the mahattatva, the ego and the five bhūta-tanmātras, in the beginning of the creation, and thus gives birth to the appearance of diversity; in other words, Māyā is held by him as the power of Īśvara, consisting of the three guṇas and endowed with a capacity of effecting vikāras (vikāra-kāraṇa-śakti). The exact relation of the three guṇas, sattva, rajas and tamas, on one hand, and the Māyā on the other, is not so clear. While at one place Māyā is said to be consisting of them [1], at another the position is reversed, and they are stated to have been born of it (Bhagavan-māyā-saṁbhavāḥ)[2]. An explanation of this anomalous position can be offered by taking the word Māyā in the latter context as standing for the inexplicable, mysterious Śakti of Īśvara, and that in the former one, denoting a metaphysical entity, enjoying empirical validity. Īśvara, the highest entity in the empirical division of the metaphysical scheme of being, can thus be held as giving birth through his indescribable, unanalysable power (known as Māyā because of its inexplicable character), to an entity consisting of the three guṇas. And it is the latter entity, known as Māyā also because of its deluding influence over the individual souls, and as prakṛti or the ultimate transformatory material cause, which evolves out into an eightfold diversity described above. Śankara's position, however, on this point, is not so clear as to justify one in ascribing such a view to him.

Thus far, we have considered the doctrine of Māyā as conceived by Śankara, from the planes of phenomenal and empirical existences. In doing so, we have seen how Śankara has

1. Vide :—B. G. B. 13, 19.
2. B. G. B. 14, 5.

accepted almost all the conceptions of Māyā, that have come down to him through ages and has adjusted them in their proper places in his complex and comprehensive scheme of metaphysics. But of course we cannot stop here. For, according to Śankara, the truth of being lies essentially beyond these planes, and the search after truth cannot be deemed as successfully concluded, and the baffling riddle of saṁsāra solved for ever, until and unless one transcends these levels of relative truth, and comprehends in its entirety what is eternally true, noumenally existent and unconditionally valid. What is the essential nature of that absolute reality, according to Śankara, we have already seen, while taking a brief view of his philosophy. Considered from this plane of transcendental reality, looked wherefrom the universe in all its aspects and facets, including even the highest empirical entities like Īśvara and Prakṛti, are as good as non-existent or at least apparently existent, the doctrine of Māyā reveals a yet subtler and newer aspect. Here the word means not magic, the cause of phenomenal appearance, not divine power, the cause of empirical appearance, not prakṛti, the ultimate material cause of the universe, but Illusion. All trends in Śankara's philosophy converge, directly or indirectly, over this ultimate stand; and all the views that he maintains over various problems fall into line with this ultimate verdict on the essence of diversity of being. Though he boldly faces all the aspects of the doctrine of Māyā, which have come to him from his predecessors, adopts them along with all their implications and characteristics, and places them in their own appropriate places in a complex scheme of metaphysics, the philosopher never forgets to lay an all-dominent emphasis on the essentially advaitic aspect. So pronounced and palpable is the influence of the doctrine of Māyā in the sense of Illusion throughout the metaphysical scheme he propounds, that it is almost needless to cite instances to that effect. Some times[1], it is felt more vividly; at another it is less emphatic; at no

1. Vide :—G· K. B. 2, 31.

times, however, it is totally absent. All that has been elucidated as belonging to the two lower planes of existence, all that is 'perceived' or cognized' (vṛtti-jñāna-viṣaya), be it then a more mirage, or the supreme divinity, endowed with a sway over the world of change, or the ultimate material cause of the world-phenomenon in its entirety, is nothing but an illusion, i. e., a non-existent thing appearing as existent. The jīva that seeks a good-for-ever solution to the riddle of finite existence, a liberation from the world of change, is himself an illusion. The bondage from which he tries to free himself is an illusion. The supreme divinity that offers her helping hand to the yearning seeker after the truth is an illusion. The sacred texts that enlighten him on the illusory character of the saṁsāra are themselves an illusion; and so is the liberation itself[1]. Even the descriptions of immanent reality, sustaining the world-illusion, are necessarily made from an empirical, and not from transcendental level. Even Māyā, either as a divine power of Puruṣottama, or as the inexplicable Śakti of the Ātman,—the Māyā, which owes its designation to its deceiving nature and function in one case[2], and inexplicable, unanalysable, character in the other—is but an illusion, and being as such does not exist[3]. Thus, the transcendental outlook, as maintained by Śaṅkara, viewed wherefrom the world of waking state becomes as shallow and substanceless as that of svapna has many a point in similarity with that of the Buddhist Śūnyavādin;—so indeed that by some, opposed to his extremist Māyā-vāda, Śaṅkara was actually censured as 'pracchanna Bauddha'. Śaṅkara, himself, however, loses no opportunity to enlarge upon the fundamental difference between the Māyā-vāda and Śūnyavāda[4]. And an impartial observer, unbiased in his outlook, will have to admit that in spite of the obvious similarities, an unbridgeable gulf indeed yawns between the stands,

1. G. K. B. 3, 32.
2. B. G. B. 15, 16.
3. G. K. B. 4, 58.
4. Vide :—B. G. B. 2, 16 and G. K. B. 1, 6; 1, 10.

offered and maintained by these two culminating peaks of the speculative philosophy that flourished in ancient India. Though of one view and opinion as regards the phenomenal validity of the world that is cognized, one flatly refuses to recognize any eternal, changeless entity sustaining it, but with the other, it is the very truth of all being. Though unanimous on the point that what appears as the subject is not the true subject, one denies the existence of his own self in any form whatsoever; but according to the other, undeniable indeed is the existence of his own self, completely identical with that all-pervading eternal principle, 'ekaṁ sat viprā bahudhā vadanti'. No other outlooks, in the domain of Indian philosophy, can be so similar and so dissimilar, at the same time.

The doctrine of Māyā, as propounded and enlarged by Śankara, is, now we can say definitely, more of a character of a bold attempt towards the inclusion, systematisation and assimilation of the various aspects thereof, which had come down to his times, – each one of them independent, into a complete harmony with the advaitic outlook on life and its implications, than of a new and original invention arrived at through independent logical reasoning. None of the earlier versions of the doctrine he rejected as unphilosophical and unreasonable. He has accepted them, has alloted them their proper places in the complex scheme of being he advocates, has, at the same time, never committed a mistake of giving them paramount importance, and has, at the end, greatly furthered his advaitic cause by enunciating the great doctrine in its essentially advaitic aspect as expressing the absolute nature of the world of diversity. And herein lies the greatness of his contribution to the AV. thought in general and the Māyā-vāda in particular, a contribution, true significance of which can be safely inferred from the fact that during the later epochs of Indian philosophy he was virtually held as the very fountain-head of those subtle doctrines.

## CHAPTER III

### SOME PHASES IN THE POST-ŚANKARA AND PRE-VĀCASPATI EVOLUTION OF THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

THE work of Śankarācārya came to exercise an unmistakable influence over the evolution of the monistic thought throughout the successive centuries. Though with further growth in philosophical give-and-take, the AV. doctrines necessarily underwent at the hands of his successors subtler elaboration and fuller clarity, they never came into conflict, directly or indirectly, with those enunciated by the Master. Credit, however, cannot be denied to the great Advaitic thinkers that followed Śankara; for it is to them indeed that the AV. system owes its enviable appearance as a complete and coherent system of metaphysics. Those are the post-Śankara advaitic philosophers that raised, discussed and solved, in accordance with their fundamental outlook, the problem that Śankara but faintly hinted at. They tried to furnish the Upaniṣadic philosophy with a rational basis in a much stronger way than Śankara did. Though never questioning the supreme authority vested in the revealed scriptures by Śankara, they tried to show in subtle details that even in the perceptual experience or in the rational thought, the monistic philosophy was beyond contradiction. This they did by a ruthless criticism of all the realistic categories, put forth by other schools of thought, as self-contradictory and erroneous on one hand, and by a supplementation of their own system through a neat clarification of many problems, epistemological, ontological and cosmological, which had been but slightly touched by the elders on the other. The most distinguishing feature of the post-Śankara evolution of monistic thought is not so much a rise of original doctrines but a fuller and more rational elaboration and systematisation of the views promulgated by

Śankara, who came to be held in later times as almost a divine personality. Even then the fluid condition of some of the fundamental concepts in the scheme of metaphysics, as conceived of by Śankara,—the condition, which we have already noticed, and to some extent have accounted for,—gave rise to differing interpretations among his disciples. These interpretations, with march of time, grew into crystalised forms, and finalised in the end as nothing less than separate schools, monistic, yet differing from each other over some fundamental problems, each one claiming its source in the teachings of Śankarācārya. Thus, two phases are clearly discernible in the post-Śankara evolution of AV. thought, the one that witnessed the appearance, growth and crystalisation of these differing tendencies, and the other that accepted these differing views as 'de facto', and tried to synthesize them. The first, covering as it does the period of 9th to 13th century, is earlier in rise than the second, that extends over the period of 14th to 18th century. The first is characterised by more original elaboration, supplementation and clarification than the second. In the latter the attempt towards systematisation and synthesis is all-powerful. Beginning immediately after the flourish of Śankara, mostly consisting of the works directly based on the literature contributed by him the first phase is characterised by three dominant currents of thought, known as Maṇḍana tradition, Sureśvara-Sarvajñātman tradition and Padmapāda tradition. Two out of these three currents, at least, came to exert moulding influence over the evolution of later monistic thought. Though upholding the monistic interpretation of the riddle of existence as the only true one, these currents differ from each other in matter of details. One of the most vital and fundamental points of deep philosophical significance over which these traditions cross swords, is the doctrine of Māyā, the most influential characteristic of AV. philosophy. A critical and analytical study of the views, maintained by these currents of thought, therefore, will be greatly beneficial to our present purpose. For, it will not only enlighten us over the main characteristics of the first epoch of post-Śankara AV.

thought, but will also enable us to have a fair view of the immediate post-Śankara development of the doctrine of Māyā, and thus furnish us with an objective acquaintance with the general background, against which Vācaspati Miśra contributed to the evolution of the advaitic thought.

The philosophical view, maintained by Maṇḍana, one of the direct disciples of Śankara, clearly illustrates the dominating tendencies of this phase, which we have briefly explained above. More attention is paid towards the enunciation of the AV. doctrines from a rational point of view. Evolution through clash with other systems of thought also gains more prominence than ever before. Thus, while the conception of fundamental reality, Brahman, as displayed in the first Kāṇḍa of the important work of this illustrious philosopher, *Brahma-Siddhi*, hardly exhibits any original aspects, but the clarity of conception and logical force of arguments are at once remarkable. Thus, according to Maṇḍana, the Bliss, which the Upaniṣads have declared to be the very nature of Brahman, is not of the character of absolute cessation of pain alone[1]; for, even in mundane experience, joy is unanimously accepted as positively different from mere negation of pain, both joy and pain being sometimes felt at one and the same time[2]; nor is it of the nature of complete renunciation of all desires through fruition thereof; for the fruition of desires is not only incapable to put an absolute end to them, but acts on the reverse as a stimulent thereunto[3], but a positive something, eternal and independent of sense-and-object-contact. Though thus the ultimate reality is Bliss, positive and undeniable, inclination towards the attainment thereof which impels the sādhaka, can not be regarded as doṣa, detrimental to the attainment of salvation; since only a fascination for the objects, non-existent in reality, yet conjured by avidyā, can be regarded as such[4]. Nor does the blissful nature

1. Vide :—B. S. page 3, line 15.
2. 1, 20.
3. 2, 8 to 15.
4. 3, 17 to 21.

of Brahman necessarily imply the existence of the tripuṭī in that ultimate state of being; for unlike the empirical one, the transcendental bliss is both cognizable and uncognizable, first, because it is self-manifest, and last, because it does not form the object of cognition.[1] The relation between bliss and Brahman is not that of attribute and substance, but that of complete identity. The texts, such as 'Vijñānam ānandaṁ Brahma' which sing of the ultimate reality as full of bliss and knowledge are nothing but particular modes of expression, based on a relation devised and not real[2]. The diversity given in empirical knowledge can be reasonably accounted for as due to the conjuring influence of avidyā. An overwhelming majority of Upaniṣadic statements, emphatically denying diversity any ultimate validity, cannot be explained away as lākṣaṇika, while those dwelling over diversity of being can be reasonably dismissed as having been made from empirical level of approach. All the complex scheme of action and fruition thereof can be easily maintained even through resorting to diversity of being imagined. Hence the Brahman, the ultimate truth, is one, without a second.[3] Not only the phenomenon of cognition fails to prove the real existence of diversity, but, on the reverse, it significantly hints at the unity of being underlying apparent diversity. Had the diversity been a reality, the cognition thereof would not simply have been there; for, while it is quite possible for one to cognize oneself as many, many, fundamentally unconnected with each other, can never cognize each other.[4] The very fact that object is cognized by subject shows that the difference between the two is only apparent. The notion of thisness or thatness associated with the object, can be accounted for as denoting one or other of the many parts superimposed on the one.[5] Of the character of bliss and one, the ultimate truth of being is birthless and deathless. Therefore, what the scriptures exhort

1. Vide :—B. S. page 4 line 12 and 13.
2. 5, 9.
3. 6, 11 to 7, 10.
4. 7, 19 to 8, 3.
5. 8, 6 to 9.

the sādhaka to do is, not to effect any transformation in his self, but to dispel the avidyā labouring under the fatal influence whereof, he has grown unconscious of his real nature.[1] Those subtle thinkers, according to whom Ātman is nothing but a chain of ever-changing momentary consciousness, will find it very difficult to adjust their conception of self with those of bondage and salvation[2]. Knowledge is not an attribute of Ātman, dependent on the conjunction of Ātman and manas, as the Naiyāyikas maintain, but very nature of him. How else are the texts, such as Satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ Brahma'[3] to be accounted for ? Though thus of the character of eternal knowledge, Ātman necessarily needs the complex psychophysical apparatus. By means of a reflection, entertained by it alone, he can manifest the vṛtti-jñānas, cognizing various objects of the world. Hence the Ātman cannot cognize all the objects in the world at one and the same time.[4] Being the very essence of Ātman, knowledge is not absent even during the state of salvation as the Naiyāyikas profess, but it does not cognize anything else at that time, simply because everything else, which had appeared as something different from the Ātman during the empirical state of being, turns out in that state to have been but Ātman. But absence of objects of knowledge never means a total negation of knowledge itself. Verily, what to Naiyāyikas seems to be supreme salvation is little short of self-annihilation[5]. Having been described as 'Dhruva' and as 'Nitya', the Ātman is ever beyond transformation. So the saṁsāra cannot be held as an actual transformation thereof. For, Ātman cannot be viewed as having been transformed either entirely, for in that case there would be no transcendental nature of Ātman left uninvolved, or in parts, for, that would be in flat contradiction of eternity and oneness professed as being the very nature of him. Ātman however can be viewed as having

1. Vide :—B. S. 8, 21.
2. 14, 16 to 15, 17.
3. Tai. U. 2, 1, 1.
4. B. S. 15, 24 to 16, 8.
5. 16, 9 to 15.

undergone transformation in parts, not real, but superimposed on him.[1]

Though sung of as 'Sarvagandhaḥ Sarvarasaḥ[2]' etc., Brahman does not exist through the existence of the multifarious aspects of the universe; for that would be in total contradiction of the acosmic view thereof preached elsewhere; it would besides amount to accept endless character of saṃsāra. It is the latter that exist through the existence of the former. Brahman is not of the character of the multiplicity of finite beings; but the finite beings are of the character of Brahman: "Brahmaṇo na sarvātmatā; Sarvaṁ tu Brahmātmakaṃ"[3]. Otherwise the world that is given in experience would be absolutely essenceless, and a slip into nihilism would be inevitable. Verily, superimposition of what-is-not is possible only on what is and not on void, as the Mādhyamikas would have it. The ultimate reality of being is eternally free from fear. It cannot be there either by necessity of nature, for, in Brahman the blissful, fear as natural would have no existence, or by force of some external factor as there is none.[4] Nor is there any fear of recurrence of the painful saṁsāra, once this transcendental reality is grasped in its entirety. For, with all his previous karmans, destroyed through the supreme realisation, with all the distinctions of kartṛ, karman and phala put to an absolute end through the total annihilation of the beginningless avidyā, the root-cause of all ills, how can the Brahmavid ever be subject again to that painful nightmare ?[5]

In support of this view as regards the ultimate reality of being, which constitutes the central theme of his entire work, Maṇḍana arranges all his dialectical arguments, which clearly display his enviable command over the metaphysical subtleties of his favourite school. By means of subtle argumentation he tries to establish that even though the pramāṇas, such as

1. B. S. 19, 13 to 22.
2. Vide :—Cha. U. 3, 14, 2.
3. B. S. 19, 23 to 20, 12.
4. 21, 2 to 7.
5. 22, 8 to 18.

perception etc. fail to bear testimony to this supreme reality, they being under the deluding influence of avidyā,[1] the word of authority (āmnāya) that enjoys paramount validity, unanimously upholds the highest truth, as maintained by the Vedāntins.[2] He spares no points to assess the exact nature of relation between karman and jñāna, and maintains that the realisation of Self as gained through the media of āmnāya being but mediate, can not uproot the immediate influence of avidyā. Immediate realisation of transcendental reality alone can deliver the goods. For an unwavering contemplation on the supreme truth, it is necessary and helpful to have a detached discharge of Vedic duties which purifies the citta of the sādhaka and also removes the obstacles in his path.[3] In Tarka-Kāṇḍa, he explains in details how even the pramāṇas such as perception, which verify diversity of being as a matter of fact, cannot contradict the āmnāya that declares the very opposite of it, as their provinces of validity are entirely different.[4] He even goes so far as to maintain that it is impossible to prove logically that even the ordinary pramāṇas necessarily cognize diversity as a matter of fact. The systematic analysis that he brings to bear upon the problem of diversity as given in perception, or the logical way in which he discusses the various arguments, put forward by the Bhedavādins of different categories, or the convincing reasons that he advances to establish that perception, cannot be logically maintained as revealing diversity, whatever point of approach is tried, speak volumes in favour of the dialectical skill of Maṇḍana. He shows in details how the objects cannot be viewed as differing from each other by their very nature either relative or independent, the notion of difference being entirely dependent on the oppositional notion of the perceiver, or how even the functional difference cannot prove beyond doubt the reality of difference between the objects, even the

1. 157, 19.
2. Vide :—B. S. 22, 19 to 26, 22.
3. 35, 1 to 8.
4. 39, 1 to 44. 9.

one having been seen to be able to funciton in manifold ways. He points out that just like other pramāṇas, that of abhāva too is unable to verify diversity as a matter of truth. Unity of being underlying the apparent diversity can be faintly perceived, even through the ordinary pramāṇas, says he. The stand of 'Particular-in-general' (sāmānaya-viśeṣa-bhāva) or of 'identity-in-difference' (Bhedābheda-vāda) are equally untenable, he further maintains; and then proceeds to show how the conception of diversity as superimposed on unity is more sound, both philosophically and logically, than that of unity as superimposed on fundamental diversity[1]. Consideration for space, however, deters us from giving in details even the thought-contents thereof. Nor are they of much importance from doctrinal point of view. Mainly concerned with refutation of conception of diversity as illogical, they, but seldom contribute something positive to the doctrinal elaboration of monism. This again holds good in the case of the major portion of the 3rd chapter, the Niyoga-Kāṇḍa, wherein the author tries to refute the Mīmānsaka view that the Vedāntic texts should be interpreted in accordance with the Mīmānsā-canon that the Vedic texts invariably imply either a command or a prohibition, and also of the fourth chapter, the last one, which is a sort of summary of all that has gone before. Scattered here and there in these two chapters are, however, some topics, which have their own philosophical significance. Such is the elucidation of the doctrine of mokṣa[2], where, having rejected various conceptions of salvation as untenable, the attainment of Brahmahood on the part of the sādhaka, the author describes as re-appearance of fundamental character of one's being, consequent upon the disappearance of false impositions thereon, or the doctrine of Sthitaprajña[3], where the problem of co-existence of supreme realisation and empirical life is accounted for.

The most important contribution to the Vedāntic thought

1. Vide B. S. 44, 10 to 73, 20.
2. 119, 8 to 121, 20.
3. 129, 18 to 133, 21.

that one comes across in Brahma-Siddhi, is, however, the conception of Avidyā, which receives a constructive elaboration therein. According to him, avidyā is called māyā or false appearance, because it is neither a characteristic of Brahman, nor different from it, neither the existent nor non-existent.[1] Had it been a characteristic of some thing, either identical with it or different therefrom, it would have been real, and something else than avidyā; if, on the other hand, it had been absolutely non-existent, it would have no practical bearing in experience; thus, it is indescribable as either sat or asat.[2] Even the nihilist and the idealist Buddhists are unable to explain the avidyā, as conceived by them, as either sat or asat; same is the case with those who accept the extra-mental existence of objective world. They cannot define avidyā, the cause of phenomenal silver as sat; for, that would inevitably lead to the acceptance of its effect as sat or as asat, for it is negated by actual experience. It is because of its inconsistent nature, indeed, that an end can ever be put to avidyā. Had it been a consistent positive category, it would have been impossible to make it forego its nature; had it been a negative one, there would have been no purpose behind this search after truth.[3] This avidyā, Maṇḍana further maintains, belongs to the individual souls. It is true that jīvas are not different from Brahman; fundamentally identical therewith, they, however, appear as different therefrom, due to 'kalpanā'. But, even if the diversity of jīvas is accepted as 'kālpanika', one may ask, to whom does this diversifying kalpanā (i. e. avidyā) belong ? Not to Brahman, because it is eternally devoid of all kalpanās. Not to jīvas, because, owing their very existence to kalpanā, how can they be the locus of their own cause ?[4] This inconsistency in the relation of avidyā and jīva, points out Maṇḍana, is due to inconsistent nature of avidyā. Had it been consistent, it

1. 9, 11 and 12.
2. Vide :—B. S. 9, 12 to 14.
3. 9, 14 to 10, 2.
4. 10, 3 to 10 8.

would not have been termed as Māyā. Therefore, the law of causation, which invariably maintains the absolute necessity of existence of cause prior to that of effect, does not hold good in the case of avidyā, which is not a 'thing' (vastu), and hence, not a subject to such a law. Therefore, though itself dependent on the jīva, kalpanā can be inexplicably held the cause thereof. The riddle of mutual interdependence can be solved in another way too. Thus, it is to say that to avidyā the jīvas owe their semblance of (independent) existence, and to jīvas, does the avidyā its own; and since this cycle is beginningless, both the jīvas and the Avidyā being themselves beginningless, there is no room for the fallacy of interdependence.[1] This latter view is held by the avidyopādāna-bhedavādins. They also maintain that avidyā is not only beginningless, but also purposeless in its activities, and thus solve the bewildering riddle of exact nature of purpose behind the appearance of universe of diversity. Just ordinary hallucinatory appearances, the world-appearance too has no purpose behind it. The apparent contradiction, involved in the Vedāntic doctrine of fundamental unity and perceptual diversity of being is also resolved, since the latter is not an actual transformation of the former, but is a creation of avidyā.[2] It is true that jīvas are fundamentally identical with Brahman and hence of pure character. How do they then form the locus of impure avidyā ? Well, they do not as a matter of fact. How can they who are eternally identical with that transcendental reality, ever remain untouched by impurity ? Yet they appear to be so. How do they appear to be so ? As does the unclean reflection of a clean face. Does it not appear as unclean, when taken in by an unclean mirror ? But, working behind the illusory appearance of a clean face as unclean, is the real uncleanliness of mirror; does Advaitin likewise accept the real existence of an impure avidyā, reflections of Brahman, taken in whereby, known as jīvas, might appear as though impure ? A reply in affirmative is detrimental to the Advaitic stand; that

1. Vide.—B. S. 10, 9 to 10 13.
2. 10, 13 to 10, 22.

in negative leaves the phenomenon, the impure appearance of pure jīvas, unexplained. Yes, what is inexplicable can never be explained. Besides, it is idle to try to find out the cause of a phenomenon, which is beginningless.[1] But if avidyā is natural, beginningless and without a cause, how can it ever be put to an end? Well, this difficulty is not confined to the Advaitin alone. It is common to all other philosophical approaches. But, while others, being advaitins, can explain the cessation of beginningless avidyā through rise of a factor, non-existent before, that explanation is denied to the Advaitins, because of their own stand. Well, it, as a matter of fact, is not denied even to Advaitins. The explanation, offered by Dvaitins, as from a level of unconditional truth, can be utilised by advaitins as being made from a level of conditional truth. For them too, it is possible to say that avidyā, which belongs to individual souls and makes them appear as impure, is, though beginningless, put to an absolute end by vidyā, which, though non-existent before, arises at the end of arduous course of self-contemplation[2]. How can Brahman, which is ever pure, ever-scient and changeless, be the locus of avidyā? Had it been so, it would not have been possible, even for the knower thereof, to nullify the influence of avidyā and attain supreme beatitude. If, again, Brahman itself is viewed as subject to bondage and liberation, through perception of diversity and realisation of unity of being, respectively, attainment of salvation on the part of one would result in the salvation of all. Therefore, the locus of avidyā is necessarily the jīva[3] and when that avidyā is removed for ever through the realisation of fundamental unity, the saṃsāra ceases to appear as really existent, and thus having risen above the conditions, superposed on the self by the self, jīva becomes one with Brahman, in spite of being eternally identical with whom, it had

1. 11, 10 to 11, 16.
2. Vide.—B. S. 11, 17 to 12, 11.
3. 12, 2 to 12, 7.

appeared as different therefrom due to avidyā[1]. Really speaking, exactly like the perception of diversity, contemplation on unity, even the perception of unity which has been sung of as leading to salvation, itself, is avidyā. Vidyā, which is the very nature of Brahman, is not perception of unity of being but unity itself. Though thus both perception of diversity and contemplation on the underlying unity are of the character of avidyā, the cessation of the former at the hands of the latter is quite logical and has many a parallel in our empirical life. To put it otherwise, avidyā (in the form of said contemplation) is dispelled by avidyā. And the moment avidyā is put to an absolute end by avidyā, the latter dying away of its own accord, the jīva, losing his jivahood, shines out in his natural glory, known as Vidyā[2]. But, an objection is sometimes raised, if the means leading to the cessation of avidyā are false (asatya), based since they are on the notion of diversity which itself is false, how can they be ever expected to lead one to the real (satya) realisation of ultimate truth ? For, false means can achieve only false ends. But, such a rule is not always upheld even in our empirical experience. There is many an example, where even the false means lead to real results. Nor are these means absolutely essenceless in character; for, even in them there is an innermost core of truth, i. e., Brahman itself. From this point of view, Brahman, taken together with avidyā (avidyānubaddham), is the means of attainment of Brahman[3]. Two-fold again is this avidyā, failure to apprehend the fundamental truth, and apprehension of non-truth, instead thereof. Out of the first develops the second. The first is dominant during the state of deep sleep, the second during those of waking and dream. The Upaniṣadic injunctions call upon the sādhaka to meditate upon the self with a view to effect, first, a complete removal of the second variety, which is more disturbing and painful than the first, and then a total conversion of the preli-

1. 12, 12 to 12, 22.
2. Vide.—B. S. 12, 23 to 13, 11.
3. 13, 18 to 14, 15.

minary mediate knowledge of Ātman into the final immediate one through direct realisation thereof. Thus, two kinds of avidyā being inevitably necessary to explain world-appearance, the akhyāti-doctrine of the Prābhākaras (which traces illusion to a single cause, non-apprehension,) is without sound ground[1]. Had avidyā consisted of only non-apprehension of unity of being (abhedāgraha), the latter being nothing better than negation (abhāva), and not so mischievious and painful by nature, there would have been nothing worth removing through Vidyā; nor would there have any sharp difference between suṣupti on one hand, and svapna and jāgṛtī on the other,—a difference, recognised even by the ancients. For, non-apprehension of unity of being is common to all the three states[2].

Even this brief review of the principal aspects of the character of transcendental reality, and of the main cause behind the appearance of conditional reality, as elucidated by Maṇḍana, is enough to impress one with the highly subjectivistic stand from which the philosopher tries to solve the riddle of existence. Talking of the ultimate reality, more as Ātman (the self) than as Brahman (the all-prevading one), of the ultimate transformatory material cause of saṁsāra, more as avidyā than as Māyā, Maṇḍana displays his pronounced inclination towards a deep subjective idealism through his subtle handling of the problem of duality of subject and object in the first chapter of his work. Duality of subject and object and apprehension thereof are mutually contradictory, says he. Had the duality been real, it could not have been bridged over, and no relation between the two warranted by a common-to-all experience 'I know this', could have been ever possible. Nor are there any convincing proofs to establish a real separate extra-apprehensional existence of objective world. On the other hand, it is quite possible to maintain that there is only one truth, the subject, which appears as object, or that what is commonly thought of as object

1. 149, 16 to 150, 2.
2. Vide B. S. 17, 19 to 8, 2.

is nothing but an illusory creation, imposed on the subject[1]. For, however one may try to explain the phenomenon of apprehension through acceptance of an intermediary, one cannot rationally maintain an existence of object as quite independent of that of subject. "Verily, just as the very same man sees his own image in the mirror to be different from him and to exist outside of him as an object, so the same self appears as all the diverse objects, outside of him"[2]. In harmony with this subjectivistic stand, he propounds the principle of avidyā as a factor responsible for the pure intelligence (cit) appearing as subjeect and object. Through avidyā, one appears as many; infinite being assumes the appearance of innumerable finite beings. Thus, the object is the Ātman, which is essentially one, immortal, birthless, changeless, of the character of pure bliss and pure knowledge, beyond fear—that eternal truth, in which exists everything else, but which itself exists in nothing else[3]. The locus of avidyā is Jīva and not Brahman. The seemingly unavoidable clash between the professed advaitic stand and the enunciated difference between the locus and the object of avidyā, is avoided through pointing to the conditional truth of the Jīva, the locus of avidyā. The reality is one, and it is pure Ātman. Through avidyā, however, it looks as many both sentient and non-sentient. The sentient ones are called jīvas. Owing their very existence to avidyā, they are also the substratum thereof. Under its veiling and conjuring influence, they apprehend themselves as different from each other and also from the fundamental reality, divide the infinite self into finite selves and non-selves, and thus go on through (self-created) cycle of birth and death. Since, however, avidyā itself, the root-cause of all trouble, has got but apparent validity, the complex diversity of saṁsāra has also got but a conditional truth in it. This, Maṇḍana elaborates now and then through dwelling upon the inexplicability of the essential nature of avidyā and of the show of finite exis-

1. 8, 2 to 8 10.
2. Vide.—B. S. 8, 2 to 8, 10.
3. 1, 1st verse.

tence raised thereby. Indeed, this indescribableness, this underfinability that characterise avidya, has been more than once pointed out as the only explanation, when no other rational explanation is forthcoming. Instances of this, we have already noticed. Avidyā, according to him, does not consist of merely non-apprehension of the ground of illusion, but also misapprehension thereof. Thus, the doctrine of anyathā-khyāti, as enunciated by the Bhāṭṭas, is more reasonable in his view than that of akhyāti, as maintained by the Prābhākaras. Non-perception of ultimate truth of being is not so disastrous and painful as perception of apparent truth, in stead. Though thus preferring anyathākhyāti-vāda to akhyāti-vāda, Maṇḍans has thrown here and there significant hints, showing his final acceptance of anirvacanīya-khyāti-vāda as the last word on the subject. His pronouncedly advaitic stand necessarily implies that his preference for viparīta-khyāti is not for its own sake, but rather because it inevitably leads one to the culminating anirvacanīya-khyāti of the advaitins, when the nature of the object of erroneous cognition is closely scrutinized. This has got its own importance, not only epistemological but even ontological. The world of diversity and its cause, the avidyā, are anirvacanīya, inexplicable. Though it is emphatically maintained that the Jīva and not the Brahman is the locus of avidyā, Maṇḍana's position as regards the problem whether avidyā differs with each one of its locus, to wit the jīvas, or it is one, common to all, is not clear. Perhaps it is a later development of the tendency, originating from Maṇḍana. Nor is his stand so clear as regards the difference, distinguishing an object of empirical validity from that of phenomenal one. It will not be, however, an exaggeration, I think, if one were to say that according to Maṇḍana, with his deep subjectivistic outlook and Jivāśrita-avidyā-vāda, the line marking off the empirical plane of existence from the phenomenal one is rather thin. And herein lies the main significance of Maṇḍana's philosophical outlook. For, in it can be seen that the doctrine of Māyā, the most distinguishing feature of AV., gradually developing along subtle

lines, having shed its fluid and varied character of Śānkara period. By him are not only repulsed the attacks of Dvaitins, and the principal tenets of monism furnished with rational basis, but are also set a-motion a number of tendencies, new and subtle, which, with march of time, gradually grew fuller, subtler and clearer, and came to acquire a distinct place within the domain of AV. thought. Maṇḍana can thus be legitimately held as the originator of the Jivāśrita-avidyā-vāda, that unique aspect of the post-Śankara career of the doctrine of Māyā. With his emphatic stand over the problem of locus of avidyā, and his deep subjectivism, he can be said to be indirectly responsible for the subtle Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda, which began to appear immediately after his flourish and gradually ascended to a prominent place in the domain of advaitic thought later on.

Contemporaneous with the Maṇḍana tradition, that of Sureśvara, the direct disciple of Śankarācārya, and Sarvajñātman, the disciple of the former, displays a philosophical outlook, which offers a clear presentation of some new tendencies, which played an important part in the evolution of later AV. thought. The chief motive behind the search for truth, is not so much a craving for bliss, as a desire for absolute salvation from pain, maintains the Sureśvara-Sarvajñātman tradition[1]. Every type of pain can be traced back, directly or indirectly, to the ignorance about the fundamental reality of being, i. e., the Ātman, on the part of the individual,. Therefore, without an absolute removal of that fatal ignorance, there can be no complete cessation of sorrow, no attainment of eternal bliss, the very essence of one's being[2]. The philosophical search after truth necessarily embraces the phenomenon of existence in its two-fold entirety, the self and the non-self, the latter consisting of every thing that is apprehended, everything, ranging from the transparent Intelligence down to the gross objects like jar. The latter is dependent for its very existence upon the former. And, it is the beginningless misconcep-

1. Vide.—N. S. 1, 1 to 3.
2. N. S. 2, 2 to 5, 2.

tion of identity between the self and the most subtle phases of non-self, which is the root-cause of all pain[1]. It owes its existence to non-perception of the self, which is of the character of immediate pure sentience. Having thus given rise to the world-appearance in all its multifarious phases, through ajñāna, the Ātman can be aptly described as the source of all[2]. Self-manifest, undisturbed by diversity, untouched by ignorance[3], Ātman is however, never contaminated by the defects of the saṁsāra, for the simple reason that the latter is eternally devoid of unconditional truth[4]. It is the eternal changeless existence of Ātman, which imparts a semblance of existence to the world-appearance essenceless in itself[5]. Though eternally sentient, Ātman can be reasonably held as the cause of the non-sentient universe. For, though seemingly illogical, the rise of the non-sentient out of the sentient turns out, on deeper investigation, to be otherwise. It is also upheld by numerous instances in empirical plane[6]. As regards the existence of Ātman, there can be no doubt; for, as the very appearance of serpent necessarily implies an existence of a piece of rope, the ground thereof, the very appearance of saṁsāra, finite in space and time, inevitably point to an underlying infinite reality, viz., the Ātman,[7] Ātman is essentially one and indivisible, and the universe is of the nature of infinite diversity, the emergence of the latter out of the former is quite admissible. Because it is of the nature of a superposition (adhyāsa) of the latter on the former, and as such can be accounted for as having for its basis, the parts devised on the former[8]. Sublation of an object superposed does not mean sublation of the ground thereof. Hence, it is quite erroneous to equate the AV. stand with the Buddhistic one, and argue that if the world is unreal, the

1. Vide.—N. S. 4, 3 to 4, 6.
2. S. S. 1st chapter, 2nd verse.
3. S. S. 1, 68.
4. N. S. 2, 50 and 51.
5. S. S. 3, 64 and 65.
6. S. S. 1, 544 to 1, 547.
7. S. S. 1 340.
8. S. S. 1 49.

ground thereof also is no better, and a slip into nihilism on the part of Māyā-vādin becomes unavoidable.[1] Falsity of the saṁsāra as an independent reality is equally justifiable in the case of its sentient aspect, i. e. the jīvas, too. For, the Jīva is neither a part nor a transformation of the transcendental reality, the Ātman, nor can the latter be viewed as fundamentally different from the former. It is the Ātman himself, who associated with different 'puryaṣṭakas', assumes the appearance of diversity of jīvas, and undergoes threefold pain, otherwise called as saṁsāra. But, because the ajñāna out of which the puryaṣṭakas come into existence is unreal in the ultimate sense of the term, the latter too turn out to be but conditionally true. Thereupon the jīva-hood of Ātman also resolves into an apparent reality. Subjection to the vicissitudes of saṁsāra on the part of the immortal Ātman, who is beyond the range of speech and mind, cannot be unconditionally real. It is through the medium of the adjuncts, supperposed on the self by the self, that the self experiences the rigours of finitude. He, however, is never contaminated in his fundamental character[2]. And at the root of this apparent subjection to the vicissitudes of ever-changing saṁsāra on the part of the Ātman, is the misnotion of identity between the changeless self and[13] the transparent Intelligence, which, enlivened by the reflection of eternal effulgence of Ātman taken in thereby, forms the substratum of vṛtti-jñānas in their various forms. This misconceived notion of identity owes its rise and existence to a non-apprehension of the true character of Ātman. For, without the latter, there would not have been the former. Such is the fundamental difference between the Ātman on one hand and the ego or the intelligence on the other. But, because a false notion, however deep-rooted it may be, is never able to effect any real change in the object thereof, the attributes and the characteristic of Intelligence, however densely superposed they might be on the real self, do not affect his funda-

1. Vide:—S. S. 1, 31 and 32.
2. S. S. 3, 6 to 3, 10.
3. N. S. 3, 19 and 20.

mental character[1]. The immanent existence of Ātman is, however, superlatively vital and necessary for the ceaseless activity of saṁsāra; because it is only out of the former that the latter derives its sustainance. It is mainly because of his sustaining and illuminating influence over the saṁsāra conjured by himself, that the sages sing of Ātman as the Sākṣin of the world-appearance[2], Fundamentally devoid of attributes, this ultimate reality of being cannot be grasped in its enirety by grosser means of apprehension, such as perception[3]; and even the inference, though it can, to some extent, transcend a bit higher than perception[4], falls far short of proving it beyond a shadow of doubt[5]. The revealed texts that enjoy unchallengable self-vested authority, can be held as the highest pramāṇa, leading to the (mediate) realisation of the fundamental reality.

Like that on the transcendental reality, the outlook on the empirical reality, maintained by the Sureśvara-Sarvajñātma tradition, also displays some new features which deserve a passing glance. An overwhelming emphasis on the importance of Ātman, the fundamental reality, which this current of thought is characterised with, renders it almost indifferent towards a systematic elucidation of the empirical reality for its own sake. Thus, it is stated that "as in the limitless sky there appears all of a sudden the bank of clouds, and disappears in the likewise manners, so on the infinite, Ātamn, appears the universe, finite and ever-changing, and disappears, having (apparently) existed for the time being"[6]. Consisting of the triputī of knower, knowledge and object thereof, the saṁsāra is of the character of false super-imposition[7], and hence is, in all its phases subtle as well as gross *as good as non-existent* (ṣaṣṭha-gocara-kalpāḥ),

1. Vide:—N. S. 2-88 to 2,90.
2. S. S. 2. 29 and 30.
3. N. S. 4, 12.
4. S. S. 1, 496 to 498.
5. S. S. 1,-496.
6. N. S. 2, 68.
7. N. S. 2, 115.

when viewed apart from Ātman[1]; but the outcome is not the same, when the scales are reversed[2]. The AV. stand as regards the empirical world is fundamentally different from one offered by the Sāṁkhyas, it is argued; for, according to the former, the universe is "an outcome of inexplicable, unaccountable, non-apprehension of Ātman, reflected in the self-manifest, birthless, deathless, changeless, pure sentience of Ātman"[3]. Though thus everything perceived during the three stages of empirical being is false, without any exception, empirical differentiation of false and real can hold good until the dawn of supreme knowledge[4]. Therefore, though the objects of waking state are now and then compared with those of dream-state by advaitin, he is not to be misunderstood as oblivious of a distinct line of demarkation, dividing phenomenal phase of reality from that of empirical one. For, though both of these phases are not real in the ultimate sense of the word, the validity of the former is negated in the latter, while that of the latter, none can sublate, except the immediate realisation of the transcendental reality[5]. Even the mediate realisation of unconditional truth of being necessarily requires a systematic investigation proceeding from the known to the unknown, the gross to the subtle. Fully aware of this, states Sarvajñātman[6], the earlier advaitins repudiated the heterodox doctrines like collectivism (Saṁghāta-vāda) etc. through the adoption of the orthodox principles like Pariṇāma-vāda. They then proceeded further and criticised the latter from the higher level of Vivarta-vāda. They abandoned even that as not unconditionally real, and found satisfaction in the culminating Ajāta-vāda. Thus the fundamental reality of being can be viewed from three points, each succeeding one marking a higher level of approach, elucidates the author of Saṁkṣepa-Śārīraka. The first and the lowest,

1. Vide:—23 N. S. 2, 114.
2. 2, 97.
3. N. S. Page—141, lines 1 to 7.
4. S. S. 2, 22 to 24.
5. S. S. 2, 32 to 36.
6. S. S. 2, 80 to 2, 90; and 3, 240.

known as Āropa-Dṛṣṭi, advocates the cosmic view of the transcendental reality; and through the adoption of the doctrine of Pariṇāma, explains the empirical reality as the real transformation of the noumenal one. Higher than it is the Vyāmiśra-Dṛṣṭi, which forms a sort of intermediary stage between the first and the last stages. It advocates a cosmic-cum-acosmic view of the fundamental reality, and adopting the doctrine of Vivarta, explains the empirical reality as the conditionally real transformation of the unconditional truth. Highest among the three is the Apavādaka-Dṛṣṭi, which, backed by subtle logic and scriptural texts, firmly upholds the uncompromisingly acosmic view of transcendental reality; and dismisses the apparent universe as essenceless as hallucination. This Doctrine of Dṛṣṭi-traya, which clearly marks the beginning of synthetical tendencies in AV. school of thought, is one of the many distinguishing features of the philosophical outlook elucidated by the Sureśvara-Sarvajñātaman tradition[1].

Main significance of the contribution of the present current of thought, however, lies, not so much in the elaboration of the doctrine of ultimate or penultimate reality, as in the novel treatment of the equally important doctrine of Māyā, the cause behind the appearance of conditional state of being. Tackling the highly subtle problem of the factor responsible for the appearance of unreal diversity in stead of real unity, neither from the view-point of individual self, not from that of an omniscient God, but in an independent way, the tradition often speaks of the said factor neither as avidyā nor as māyā, but as ajñāna. Of course, no opportunity is ever missed to equate all the terms as signifying one and the same entity. Ajñāna, it is maintained, spoken of as tamaḥ, māyā, avidyā, prakṛti, etc. on the revealed scriptures, is the principle, the chief characteristic whereof consists of veiling the self-effulgent sentience of Ātman (ajaḍa-bodha-tiraskriyātma). It is inexplicable and inconsistent in its fundamentals (ati-duḥsthita-vapuḥ); mutually inconsistent though it may seem, for both its locus and object

1. Vide:—S. S. 2, 60 to 63.

the immortal Dṛk, is one without second[1]. The characteristics of non-sentience and 'dull apprehension' (mauḍhyaṁ), which are ever perceived in the non-sentient and the sentient phases of saṁsāra, conclusively point out that their ultimate material cause is necessarily something more positive than mere negation (abhāva)[2]. Had it been a mere negation of jñāna, it would not have been capable of a veiling function attributed to it in the scriptures. Being fundamentally essenceless, the negation is never able to conceal any thing, far less the self-effulgent Ātman[3]. The positive character of ajñāna is actually upheld by a common-to-all experience thereof, during the state of deep sleep, which is reflected in the latter reminiscence—'I slept well; and did not know anything'. That it is not determinately cognized during the very state of suṣupti itself, is due to the submerged condition (vilīnāvasthā) of the antaḥkaraṇa in that state[4]. Though thus positive in character and the transformatory constituent cause of the entire universe in all its multifarious phases (aśeṣa-jagadekanidāna-bhūtam)[5], it is almost essenceless (nirvastukā) when compared with the transcendental reality, and is hence easily dispelled, the moment the immediate realisation of the latter dawns upon the sādhaka[6]. However one may try, one ultimately despairs of giving any perfectly rational or purely logical explanation of ajñāna. Devoid of any sound foundation and flatly contradictory to all standards of judgment, it simply refuses to submit itself to any critical investigation[7]. But, while it is inexplicable, it is also indispensible (ananyathāsiddha). Though characterised with two-fold function, viz., concealment of reality and projection of unreality in stead, it is the former, which is more fundamental and fatal in its influence, maintains the Sureśvara tradition.

1. S. S. 1-317.
2. S. S. 1-320 and 3, 129.
3. S. S. 1-322.
4. N. S. 3, 48.
5. S. S. 3, 131.
6. S. S. 2, 125.
7. Vide:—N. S. 3, 66.

Consequentially, ajñāna is often talked of as non-apprehension, not so much as mis-apprehension, of immanent truth of being[1]. It is out of the non-apprehension that the misapprehension arises, it is argued; Ajñāna, with the predominance of tamas, conceals the fundamental reality and with that of rajas, conjures up the appearance of conditional reality against the back-ground thereof. It lends a semblance of existence not only to the universe of diversity, but also to its own self. With its energy not exhausted in giving birth to the world-appearance, it is equally capable of this apparently-inconsistent double activity; besides, there is, on empirical plane, many a case, where a similar double activity is known to exist, which one is ultimately forced to accept as the only solution.[2] Of this ajñāna, which is the only principle that can be held as responsible for the otherwise-inexplicable relation of Self with unreal non-self, Ātman alone can be both locus and object. and not the non-self. Owing its very rise and existence to it, how can the non-self ever be the locus of its very cause, viz., ajñāna ? Divorced from ajñāna, the non-self loses its semblance of existence. Had the non-self (be it then God or Jīva) been the locus of ajñāna, nothing, not even the jñāna, would have been able to destroy ajñāna. For, with Self and Non-self for their locus, Jñāna and Ajñāna would have no mutual contradiction (vadhya-ghātaka-bhāva-virodha). That the locus of ajñāna is Ātman, is further pointed out by the texts, such as—'So ahaṁ Bhagavo mantra-vid evāsmi, nātma-vid'[3], or by the common-to-all-of-us experience—I do not know'. Know as—Pralaya, Anṛta, Nidrā, Power of Almighty, Suṣupti, etc., ajñāna can have for its locus only the ever-scient Ātman; that ajñāna has for its substratum the non-self (which is the product of ajñāna, and is, hence ajñāna itself) it is simply illogical to maintain.[4] But it is equally illogical to conceive of the Self, who is of the character of eternal, self-effulgent jñāna, as

1. N. S. page 146, line-6.
2. S. S. 1-53 to 1, 55.
3. N. S. 3, First 20 lines.
4. S. S. 1-318.

the locus of ajñāna, non-sentient and impure,—one can raise an objection. The objection would have been valid if ajñāna would have been conceived of as mere negation of jñāna; that it is essentially more than that, a positive entity of empirical validity of highest order, we have already shown. Hence, the Ātman can be reasonably held as the locus of it[1]. However illogical the stand may seem, one just cannot help accepting it. The bare fact that it is actually cognized, either in the form of pure non-apprehension (as during the state of deep sleep) or in that of mis-apprehension (as during the jāgrat and the svapna states) of fundamental reality, uncontradictably establishes the inexplicable soundness of the above stand. Avidyā, with non-self for its locus, would not have been an object of apprehension.[2] Subsistance of ajñāna in the Self is however never to be mistaken for an unconditional truth; for that would mean a contradiction of first order. Ajñāna being but a conditional reality, how can its relation with Ātman be a matter of unconditional truth ? Verily, it is because of its empirical validity that the ajñāna, though of a positive and beginningless character, can be put to an absolute end through the realisation of the ultimate truth[3]. As can be easily expected, the outlook, maintained by Maṇḍana school, is severely criticised by the protagonists of Sureśvara-Sarvajñātman tradition. "It is the partless Ātman that assumes the appearance of both the locus and the object of ajñāna; for, how can the ego the Jīva be held as the locus of it, when the latter (ajñāna) is already existent before the appearance of the former ?"[4]. The problem of locus of ajñāna, as handled by Sarvajñātman in the second chapter of his Saṁkṣepa-Śārīraka, while discussing the problem of continuance of universe after the liberation ofr a paticular Jīva, throws a flood of light over the subtle tendencies that had become manifest in the immediately post-Śankara AV.

1. S. S. 1, 316 and 317.
2. N. S. 253, 7 to 254, 1
3. S. S. 1, 51.
4. S. S. 1, 319.

philosophy. No less than some seven importeant tendencies have been examined and dismissed as without sound grounds. A brief review of the most important among them would be undoubtedly both interesting and instructive. First and foremost among them is the view, maintained by Maṇḍana school. According to it[1], just like a generality (jāti), which is one, is common to all particular individual, subsisting in all of them, leaves a particular individual when it is destroyed, yet continues to subsist in the rest of the individuals, the ajñāna, the cause of world-appearance, too, is one common to all jīvas (the reflections of Brahman). It subsists in all of them, leaves a particular jīva the moment the latter is enlightened, yet continues to subsist in the rest of the jīvas, labouring under its influence. Next to it comes another view, which clearly represents a further development of the Maṇḍana-view. Ajñāna, it maintains[2], is not one; but it differs with everyone of innumerable jīvas. The sustaining and motivating force that keeps up the world-appearance and keeps it a-going, is, it is further pointed out, not the innumerable ajñānas of the innumerable jīvas but a divine power, the māyā, which is mutually different from the individual ajñānas, has for its locus God, and is eternal. While an individual ajñāna of an individual Jīva is destroyed by an individual jñāna, the other individual ajñānas continue to exist, and the show of saṁsāra goes on undisturbed, because it is maintained and sustained by an eternal power of God. Both these views, which, in spite of some fundamental divergences, are unanimous over one point, namely that the locus of ajñāna is the individual soul and Brahman, the object thereof, are met with severe criticism at the hands of Sarvajñātman. If one accepts the Jīva as the locus of ajñāna, and the Brahman as the object thereof, one would ultimately despair of proving the very existence of the Brahman and its being the object of ajñāna, it is stated[3]. For, if the existence of Brahman

1. Vide:—S. S. 2, 132.
2. S. S. 2, 133.
3. Vide:—S. S. 2, 139 to 2, 141.

is proved through ' right knowledge', Brahman inevitably turns out to be non-sentient. For, whatever is an object of knowledge, is invariably non-sentient, as the jar is. Likewise, if the ajñāna about the Brahman is proved through 'right knowledge', it, too, like Brahman, would be 'real'. Nor can the existence of Brahman be proved through 'wrong knowledge'; for, in that case, Brahman too, just like ajñāna, would be butapparently, and not ultimately, real. Nor can Brahman be held as 'Self-proved'. For, to accept it as the object of ajñāna and yet to maintain it as self-manifest or self-proved is self-contradictory. The drawbacks that attend the first view are equally applicable to the second too. If Brahman, characterised by Māyā is to be proved through 'false knowledge', it, like Māyā, necessarily tends to be 'imagined' (kalpita); if through "right knowledge', Māyā, like Brahman, tends to be ultimately real; and Brahman to be non-sentient; if it is to be self-manifest, Māyā inevitably tends to be likewise; for no justification can be put forth to prove that Brahman, different from the jīvas, is self-manifest, and hence entient and real, Māyā that is exclusively his, is not so. Mutual distinction between the jīvas and the Brahman, as proessed by these two schools, is also equally illogical. For, if these mutally distinct jīvas are apprehended as such by Brahman, the former inevitably tend to be non-sentient; if not, Brahman turns out to be less than omni-scient. This mutual distinction of the self-manifest jīvas again cannot be either self-manifest or otherwise. For, in the first case, it would become real; in the second, it would depend on cognition; and as cognition of a distinction necessarily depends upon that of the things distinguished, apprehension of the mutual distinction of the jīvas is impossible without that of the jīvas themselves; and how that is also impossible, we have already seen.[1] According to the third view, there is in the divisionless, partless, relationless, pure, deathless Brahman, one without second, one avidyā. Thus, Brahman is both the locus and the object thereof. In spite of this, enlightenment of one does not result in the libe-

1. Vide : S. S. 2, 1942 to 151.

ration of all, and this is due to the inexplicable character of avidyā, which, though deprived of even empirical existence in the Brahman by the realisation of highest truth on the part of one individual self, continues to enjoy the same in the case of others[1]. But, it is indeed illogical to maintain the existence and the non-existence of one and the same thing (viz. avidyā) in one and the same ground (viz. Brahman) at one and the same time, without having any resort to (even imagined) adjuncts thereof (=of the ground). Nor is there any conclusive proof to establish the existence of avidyā in Brahman, in one case, and the non-existence thereof in the other[2]. Improving upon the third, the fourth school propounds that, endowed with the conjuring power, the impure ajñāna conjures up an infinite number of manas. Each one of these manas operates for each one of the individual souls. Through the media thereof it continues to exist in the transcendental truth, Brahman. Thus the existence and the non-existence of one ajñāna in one Brahman is through the media of the adjuncts, the manas; and hence is quite logical[3]. But this view has got its own inconsistencies. For, had the manas been a neutral medium (taṭastha-upādhi) of appearance of impure ajñāna in the pure Brahaman, nothing could have been able to restrict the impure ajñāna to its particular individual spheres (designated by particular minds) and thus prevent it from spreading far beyond its limits, and obscure it in its entirety[4]. Therefore, argues Sarvajñātman, the Self alone can be both locus and object of ajñāna, and not the jīvas, which, arising out of ajñāna, cannot be locus of their own cause. For, Jīva is but a reflection of the self-glorious Brahman, received by antaḥkaraṇa, produced by ajñāna. Had the ajñāna for its locus, the Jīva, the illuminating jñāna, which is the very essence of ultimate reality, would never have been able to annihilate it. However inconsistent it may

1. S. S. 2, 134.
2. S. S. 2, 152 to 2-158.
3. S. S. 2, 135.
4. S. S. 159 to 160.

seem there is nothing unreasonable in one and the same thing (viz. Brahman) being both locus and object of the other[1]. It is now and then stressed that it is neither in its all-pervading aspect, nor in that of Bliss, (for there is neither experience nor the word of authority to justify it) but it is in its aspect of immediate sentience, that Ātman is both locus and object of ajñāna (caitanya-vastu-viṣayāśraya eva mohaḥ)[2], and not the Jīva, who owing its very emergence into being to Tamas, can not be the cause of its own cause[3]. It is the ajñāna, one and not many, that, depending for its very existence upon the Ātman in its aspect of immediate sentience, conceals the noumenal reality and then gives rise to the phenomenal one. Every thing that falls within the sphere of objectivity is the projection of one ajñāna existing and operating against one cit. Sarvajñātam ably points out that this stand does not necessarily come into conflict with the given diversity of jīvas, or violate the mutual difference of Jīvātman from Paramātman, or result in the chaotic confusion[4]. The inconsistenncies that one has marked in the approaches along other lines, also are absent in this stand, maintains he. For, there is a sharp line marking off the empirical plane of existence from the phenomenal one, no doubt; but it loses its significance the moment both the lower phases are viewed from the transcendental point. In other words, the world, as perceived in the dream-state is fundamentally similar to that cognised in the jāgrat; for, both have got but conditional validity. Now, just as the scheme and order of world as perceived in the dream-state, have truth of boeing only so long as the dream-state continues and dissolve the moment the latter ceases to be, the complex scheme of the empirical universe in all its phases, subtle or gross, noble or ignoble, sentient or non-sentient, in its co-ordinated activity, has truth of being only so long as the empirical state of being one, does not surpass by realising the highest truth.

1. S. S. 2, 208 to 2, 212.
2. S. S. 3, 13 and 14.
3. S. S. 3, 15.
4. S. S. 2, 170 to 173.

The moment one surpasses it, one's vision is lifted above the apparent diversity of being and one is conscious of the fundamental unity. Hence, all the processes of self-purification, all the philosophical arrangements as regards the problem of existence, all the distinctions of learned or ignorant, enlightened or bound, are valid only during the saṁsārāvasthā. In the transcendental one, there is none but Self, one without second. Hence, it is entirely wide of the mark to try to account for the continuance of the universe after the liberation of a particular jīva,—a mistake the protagonists of the said views have been guilty of.[1]

Neither the changeless Brahman nor the non-sentient ajñāna, taken by itself, can be held as the principle cause of the world-appearance. It is the latter, animated by the enlivening reflection of the former, that is the main reason, declare the texts. Non-sentient and depending for its very existence on Brahman, the ajñāna can be aptly characterised as but an instrument (dvāra), through which the former produces the world-appearance.[2] It does not enjoy an independent status of its own. In order to avoid absurdity, inherent in the acceptance of Brahman as the direct cause of the world of diversity, one has to accept ajñāna as an intermediary and not ultimate principle responsible for the appearance of one as many.[3] The comprehensive character of ajñāna as enunciated by this tradition, becomes althemore clear when it is emphatically identified sometimes with Māyā, it is maintained,[4] in as much as it has got the power of spelling delusion,—a characteristic unanimously attributed to the factor, responsible for the hallucinatory appearances on the empirical plane of being. Even Māyā, attributed to God as a divine power, is essentially ajñāna itself; because it is made up of those characteristics,

1. S. S. 2, 128 to 2, 131.
2. S. S. 1, 323. S. S. 2, 162-163; 189.
3. Vide:—S. S. 1, 332.
4. S. S. 3, 86, 94, 96.

which have been found among the fundamentals of ajñāna.[1] There is however one important point of difference. While the ajñāna (called as Māyā in that context) has only conjuring influence over God, it (called as avidyā or moha in that context) has both veiling and conjuring influence over the individual soul.[2] While the Paramātman has got control over it, the Jīvātman is under its control till the realisation of highest truth. Fundamentally however, when considered without any reference to individual soul or God, it is ajñāna, one, non-sentient, positive in character, a penultimate cause of the universe of diversity and endowed with the highest degree of empirical validity. It is yet dependent for its existence and operation, on the transcendental reality. It owes its existence to, and is hence destructible through the annihilation of, the non-apprehension of the noumenal character of Ātman.[3]

Even the brief view we have just taken is sufficient to reveal the rich complexity of the doctrine of Māyā (more often spoken of as ajñāna), as enunciated by the Sureśvara-Sarvajñātman tradition. Riddle of existence is sought to be solved neither from the angle of Jīva, nor from that of God, but from a point surpassing these two. The truth of being, consequentially, is spoken of more as cit (sentience) than as either pratyagātman or Paramātman. Of course, no opportunity is lost to identify the latter two with the former. Same is the case with the penultimate cause of saṁsāra, to wit, ajñāna. It is spoken of more as such than as either avidyā or Māyā. The conception of ajñāna, as advocated by this tradition, reflects a far greater clarity of thought and subtlety of details,—a distinct advance over the age of Śankara. Indeed, this can be reasonably held as the case with almost all principal tenets as enunciated in this tradition. The clash of various currents of thought over the problem of locus of ajñāna and the allied questions we have

1. S. S. 2, 169.
2. S. S. 2, 168.
3. S. S. 2, 190.

taken note of, clearly shows the rich variety of lines along which the principal tenets of AV. thought were developing in the immediate post-Śankara period. No wonder then if Maṇḍana's Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine comes under hot fire from the protagonists or what may be called as Cidāśrita-avidyā doctrine, and is mercilessly laid bare in all its inconsistencies. The ontological position as maintained by the latter reduces the whole complex show of finite existences, down to one ajñāna and one cit, the former depending for its very existence upon the latter, veiling it with its impurity (tamas) and then conjuring up the show of diversity of being. And this makes the Cidāśrita-ajñāna-vādin virtually eka-jiva-vādin. To put it more clearly, according to the Cidāśrita-ajñāna-vādin, the term non-self, which signifies the things of conditional validity, covers not only objective reality of non-sentient character, but also the sentient jīvas and even God himself. The stand, though agreed upon by all the advaitins, is much more important in its implications. By declaring that it is idle and futile to think over the problem of continuance of the empirical universe, after the liberation of one particular individual jīva, in as much as there is actually no continuance of it as such (the universe of the particular enlightened soul, having vanished with the dissolution of his ajñāna), or by comparing the world of jāgrat with that of dream with a view to emphasize the fundamental similarity between the two, the position of the Cidāśrita-ajñāna-vādin begins to appear as strikingly similar to that of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādin, the protagonist of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda. A deeper appreciation of the stand of the former, however, exposes the similarity as superficial. For, while the outlook of Maṇḍana tradition condescends to grant empirical validity to separate universes of other jīvas, co-existent with his own, that of Cidāśrita-ajñāna-vādin refuses to waver even to that extent, from an extremist advaitic stand. In short, the stand of Maṇḍana, whether in the original or in a more developed form marks a lower phase of the doctrine of Vivarta, while that of Sureśvara-Sarvajñātman tradition, a higher one

This has been more than once hinted at by Sarvajñātman himself. It is besides the only logical outcome of the 'eka-cid-āśrita-eka-ajñāna-vādin'. Another point of difference that deserves notice is that while Maṇḍana gave overwhelming importance to the conjuring influence of avidyā as more fatal, Sureśvara and Sarvajñātman adopt a view exactly opposite to it, and go so far as to designate the root-cause of all trouble as 'ātmānavabodha, i. e., non-apprehension of ultimate truth. Consequentially, while Maṇḍana favours to some extent the 'anyathākhyāti' of the Bhāṭṭas as ultimately leading to the 'anirvacanīya-khyāti' of the advaitins, Sureśvara, the earlier protagonist of the tradition under review, refutes it in an out-right manner. Similar to this, can be found many a point of divergence in the outlooks maintained by these two impotant traditions. But consideration for unity of theme has compelled us to confine our attention mainly to the comparative study of the views, entertained by them, as regards the doctrine of Māyā.

The exuberant activity that characterized the post-Śankara current of advaitic thought gave rise to yet another sub-current of opinion, known as the Padmapāda tradition. Originating from the renowned Ācārya Padmapāda, the great disciple of Śankarācārya, this tradition also, like those of Maṇḍana and Sureśvara, displays, besides the enunciation of older doctrine, the distinct beginnings of some novel tendencies, which no student of post-Śankara and pre-Vācaspati advaitic thought can ignore. Though agreeing with other co-existing tradition on the fundamental concepts, these tendencies undeniably differed therefrom in their mode of presentation. With march of time, they gathered distinct individuality of their own, and crystalized in the end into a separate school of AV. thought, claiming, like its rivals, a direct basis in the teachings of the great Master.

Comprehensive in its deliberations, the philosophical outlook as advocated by Padmapāda emphatically maintains that what is spoken of as 'avyākṛta-nāmarūpa', 'māyā' prakṛti', 'agrahaṇa'

avyakta,' 'kāraṇa', laya', 'śakti', 'mahā-supti', nidrā', 'kṣara', and 'ākāśa', in the earlier literature, is avidyā, a positive entity, which obstructs the pure, self-manifest and independent nature of Brahman, and acting as a painted board (citra-bhitti) of ignorance, deeds and impressions of past knowledge (pūrva-prajñā-saṁskāra), produces the individual souls (jīvatvāpādikā).[1] The immediate ego (ahaṁkāra), which is the substratum of two powers of knowledge and activity, and which functions as the doer of all actions and the experiencer of all the fruits thereof, is a peculiar transformation (pariṇāma) of this very avidyā. This immediate ego is self-manifest by virtue of its being illuminated through association, by the pure, unchangeable light of Brahman (kūṭastha-caitanya- saṁvalana-sañjāta jyotiḥ). Through association with this immediate ego, even the pure self, devoid of the element of thisness (anidamaṁśaḥ), has come to be falsely regarded as the enjoyer of the experiences.[2] Avidyā thus manifests itself by veiling the self-luminosity of eternal Brahman in the individual jīvas; and hence, Brahman, one without second, can be reasonably held as the ground (āspada) of the appearance of infinite number of individual selves, subjected to limitation by the beginningless avidyā.[3]) Without any principle such as avidyā, which is a sort of śakti, to fall back upon as the source of its apparent existence, the cognition of non-self world in all its phases which, taken by itself, is false, remains ever unaccountable. Avidyā-śakti has for its ground Brahman by law of nature, and it exercises its power of projection in the case of objective (empirical reality, and that of concealment in that of (subjective) transcendental one.[4] The characterisation of avidyā as mithyā-jñāna, found in the earlier texts, should not be mistaken as a simple negation of jñāna. For the word mithyā, which is employed to denote either the character of simple negation or

1. Vide:—P. P. 20, 11 to 20, 15.
2. 20, 15 to 20, 20.
3. 15. 1-2.
4. 4, 22 to 5, 5.

that of indescribability[1] expresses, when used in context of ajñāna, the latter and not the former meaning. Thus, the term Mithyājñāna virtually denotes the non-sentient indescribable avidyā-śakti of a material nature (jadātmika), and not the negation of jñāna[2] It is true to some extent that there seems to be a sort of mutual inconsistency in the stand that the self-luminous Brahman is veiled by the impure avidyā; but it can be explained away as it is not in its aspect of eternal existence, that the self-luminous Brahman is veiled by avidyā; but it is so in its aspect of being eternally different from the aggregate of cause and effects (i. e., body with all its accessories); and this much has been upheld by actual experience, and hence undeniable[3]. Avidyā is also taken of as 'adhyāsa'. Though thus used as synonmous with the other, both these terms lay subtle emphasis on different aspects of the same principle. Thus, 'adhyāsa', highly subjective in character, lays emphasis on the conjuring activity of ajñāna (atadrūpāvabhāsitvaṁ), and 'avidyā', less subjective than the former, on that of concealment (ācchādakatvaṁ). Being equally removable by vidyā, 'adhyāsa' has been frequently described as 'avidyā' by earlier authorities[4]. Adhyāsa has been aptly described as 'sarvānartha-hetuḥ. For, it is the apprehension (avabhāsa) of the (apparently real) co-mingling of the eternal, sentience-by-itself-alone (cidekarasaḥ), Ātman (which forms the 'non-this' element in the immediate ego), with the non-Ātman in all its psychophysical phases, right from transparent Intelligence down to gross body[5]. This adhyāsa is a sort of misapprehension on an extremely subtle subjective plane. Thereupon is based the complex structure of both empirical and phenomenal realms of being. It has, for its ground, the Ātman, ever-existent, ever-pure, ever-scient, ever-free. It can be put to an end through the immediate

1. 4, 6 to 4. 7.
2. 4, 19 to 4, 21.
3. 15, 7 to 15, 14.
4. Vide:—P, P. 30-5 to 30 16.
5. 3, 21 to 24,

realisation of the ground of it alone[1]. This adhyāsa, which is directly manifested by the principle of sentience (citi-dhātu), is the superimposition not only of, non-self on the self, but also in the reverse order. This phenomenon of mutual superposition, which is upheld by actual experience, accounts reasonably for both the non-apprehension of immanent reality and the apprehension of the apparent one. Had the non-self alone been super-imposed on the self, the self would not have been manifest in the immediate ego (aparokṣa-ahaṁkāra),—a position, where even the non-self would have ceased to appear as existent; for, divorced from the former, the latter simply does not exist.[2] As in the cases of ordinary adhyāsa in this empirical life, in the present adhyāsa also, there is a doṣa, which can be held as the factor responsible for the whole muddle; and it is the avidyā, consisting of the non-apprehension of transcendental truth of being, points out Padmapāda. Thus, his stand on the mutual relation between avidyā and adhyāsa turns out to favour, neither that of complete identity, nor that of identity with slight difference as explained above, but some thing like that of cause and effect. Adhyāsa owes its being to avidyā. This stand does not, however, necessarily imply diversity of principle[3]. This phenomenon of adhyāsa itself, it is further maintained, is a proof of the unconditional existence of the ground thereof. For, even in the empirical life, no case of adhyāsa has been ever found, which can be undeniably accepted as devoid of any ground. To propound an adhyāsa as devoid of any ground is self-countradictory[4]. The mutual superposition of the self on the non-self and vice versa can not be accounted for as having for its ground both the self and the non-self, equally empirically real. Because, devoid of any ground in the form of unconditional reality to fall back upon, it results in a successive chain of such superpositoins,

1. 5, 19 to 5, 21.
2. 35, 24 to 36-4.
3. Vide:—14, 7 to 24, 20.
4. 12, 7 to 12-10.

ultimately leading one into the positon of 'regressus ad-infinitum.[1] The fact of mutual superposition against the back-ground of immanent reality is again upheld by the sheer impossibility of a real co-mingling of the two (itaretara-saṁbheda-anupapattiḥ). Of the nature of pure, undisturbed sentience, the self cannot become the non-self, either by itself or subject to outside factors, simply because it is beyond transformation and every type of impurity. Likewise, the non-self can never become the self, either by itself or due to outside factors. For, in the first case, it would cease being non-self; while the second is denied by the non-transformability of cit (apratisaṁkramatvāt). The confusion of the self and the non-self being thus an impossibility, apprehension thereof, ever-cognized in the immediate ego, inevitably turns out to be an adhyāsa, arising out of the non-apprehension of the ground thereof[2]. Indeed, it is this emphatic acceptance of some unconditional truth as the basis of the conditional one, implied by the adhyāsa, which distinguishes the Advaitin's conception of adhyāsa from that of the Śūnyavādin, who flatly refuses to accept anything as the ground of the complex show of mutual superimpositions. Every sublation, while denying the thing superposed, never fails to point to the thing superposed upon. Every sublation therefore is a qualified (adhigatāvadhiḥ) denial; and hence, when the supreme knowledge dawns upon the seeker, it sublates the mutual superimposition as unreal, and enlightens him into the immediate realisation of the ground of that superposition, viz., Brahman, as his real self[3]. But, one can raise an objection: the Self being (as maintained by Advaitins themselves) eternally free from 'thisness' (anidamātmakatatvāt) and hence ever beyond the range of apprehension, how can it be both subject and object of the mutual superposition defended above ? The objection would have been valid, remarks Padmapāda[4], had the Self

1. 12, 11 to 12, 18.
2. 3, 1 to 3, 20.
3. Vide:—P. P. 12, 18 to 12, 24.
4. 24, 8 to 24, 10 & 29, 5 to 29, 7.

been totally beyond the scope of apprehension in whatsoever form and manner. It is, however, not so. It actually forms the indispensible element of non-this-ness in the complex immediate ego (ahaṁkāra-granthiḥ), and is, though indirectly and not in all its true glory, reflected by the transparent Intelligence. He is thus brought within the scope of empirical activity. Indeed, one can even assert that the Self, in spite of its ever being non-object, becomes subject to superposition (adhyāsa-yogya) not only because of his being the object of the cognition, I, in an indirect manner, but by virtue of its eternally being immediately present (aparokṣatvāt) in all types of cognition.[1] Developing the conception of noumenal reality, the Ātman, thus maintained to be the undeniable ground of adhyāsa, Padmapāda argues, that none, not even the extremist nihilist, can ever deny its self-manifest existence; for, he, who denies the Ātman, is himself what he denies (ya eva nirākartā, tasyaiva ātmatvaprasaṅgāt). Nor does Ātman cease to exist, after having existed for some time. For, it is ever beyond the reach of the causes that bring about non-existence, and surely it cannot be propounded as ceasing to exist without any cause at all[2]. The eternal principle of sentience (citi-dhātuḥ), which remains ever-untouched, transformationless, one, that cannot be taken up or given up (hānopādāna-śūnyaḥ), direclty manifests the subtle transformations of the internal organ, which, the Jīva, labouring under the influence of avidyā, mistakes for his real self[3]. Really speaking, the only point of contention and clash among the thinkers is not (the existence of) the self; for, none, not even the most stupid soul, can ever doubt his own existence. It is about the exact and real nature of self, states Padmapāda. He further takes a bird's-eye view of the principal theories, proceeding from the gross to the subtle, points out the inherent draw-backs of each and every one of them, and finally arrives at the Advaitic one as the only logical reading

1. 29, 11 to 30, 4.
2. 95, 1 to 95, 6.
3. 35, 19 to 35, 23.

of the fundamental character of the Self.[1] The aspect of the Ātman, which is ever-present as the non-this element in the ego-cognition and is hence, though indirectly, an object of cognition, is, however, not the whole and sole of that transcendental reality; much thereof necessarily remains unembraced by the immediate ego-cognition, much, like its omni-science, omni-potence and omni-presence.[2] This, however, offers no justification for holding, as is actually done by the Dvaitins, the non-this element in the immedite ego as something mutually different from the transcendental reality. For, just as a reflection is but superffcially different from the thing reflected (bimba), so is the Jīva from the immanent supreme reality. Verily, the former is but a reflection of the latter. The unconditional validity of the 'non-this' element in the ego is further pointed out by the great teachings like 'Tat Tvam asi'. Far from sublating the truth of being on the part of the Jīva in its totality (in which case, the teaching would have been somewhat like Na Tvam asi) they point to the underlying unity between the Jīvātman and the Ātman, and only denounce the appearance of difference (vicchedāvabhāsa) dividing the two as unreal.[3] The example of bimba and pratibimba, however must not render one unmindful of one important fact. For, while the recognition of fundamental identity between the reflection and the reflected does not resolve into the dissolutiof (nivṛtti) of the former, the realisation of unity between itseln and the Ātman, on the part of the Jīva, who is ever untouched by the non-sentience (jāḍya) of the antaḥkaraṇa, inevitably result in the absolute removal of his egoistic character (ahaṁ-kartṛ-tvaṁ rūpaṁ);[4] for it is false (mithyā). Returning again to the problem of unconditional truth, Padmapāda develops the earlier views and states that it is of the character of beginningless Bliss, changeless Knowledge and limitless Existence. It

1. 72-6 to 75, 1.
2. 75. 1 to 75, 5.
3. Vide:—21, 23 to 23, 8.
4. 23, 9 to 23, 20.

is far above the show of finite existences (abhūta-dvaita-jālāya), and is the illuminator thereof.[1] The very term of Brahman, employed by the sacred texts to denote transcendental reality, lays an overwhelming emphasis on infinitude as the most distinguishing feature thereof. It not only implies that the fundamental reality of being is unlimited, either by time, or by space, or by a thing different therefrom, but it also hints that it i never an object, but always a subject, that it is of the nature of pure, undisturbed sentience and is ever-enlightened and ever-free. Nothing, the word Brahman further implies, can ever remain beyond the range of its power and knowledge; for, in that case it's significance necessarily turning out to be but relative, it would simply cease being 'Brahman', i. e., 'the great' in the primary sense of the term.[2] It is, observes Padmapāda, the only stay (avaṣṭambha) of the universe in its multifarious transformations; and the great cosmic power and entities derive their sustainance from it. Nothing else than Brahman, nothing like non-sentient pradhāna, or like Hiraṇyagarbha, endowed with limited power of knowledge and action, can be ever logically conceived of as the source of universe. The saṁsāra again cannot have been emerged into being out of unqualified non-being (abhāva); for, in that case which is extremely illogical, all would have been an utter confusion. For, there would not have been any impression, left by the previous existences, to govern the process of transformation on the individual and the cosmic life-planes. Nor would it suffice to point to nature (svabhāva) as the sole governing factor responsible for the smooth working of the universe.[3] Verily, it is because of the deathless, changeless existence of the ultimate cause, i.e., Brahman, which remains ever untouched by the forces of construction and destruction going on in the empirical universe, that after the universal dissolution, the latter re-emerges into being. Had the former been subject to death, there would

1. 1, 1st verse;
2. 70, 23 to 71, 19.
3. 78, 8 to 79, 2.

have been nothing left but void, and the reappearance of the latter would have been impossible for want of a cause[1]. Turning to the objective reality, Padmapāda emphatically maintains that the subject alone is real in the unqualified sense of the term, and everything that falls within the category of object is unreal, not only in its association (sambandha) with the subject, but in its very self (svarūpato'pi adhyasta-rūpatvāt).[2] Even the immediate ego, which is called as antaḥkaraṇa or buddhi, on the side of its cognitive activity, or as prāṇa on that of biomotary one, is unreal. However, it is not non-existent like a barren woman's son. For, in that case, it would never have been an object of apprehension, even in the form of a superimposition. He flatly refuses to fall in line with the extremists, who declare the world to be non-existent. He recalls the line of distinction he had previously drawn between the two meanings of the word mithyā, viz., falsehood as simple negation and falsehood as the indescribable, and states that whenever he speaks of the objective reality as mithyā or adhyasta, he means to say that it is of the character of indescribable and beginningless avidyā, and nothing more[3]. He has however no objection to the characterisation of objective reality as 'asat' if it is made to draw one's attention to its indescribable and inconsistent nature in contrast with that of transcendental reality (avidyāyā nirupākhyatām aṅgīkṛtya asattvam uccyate cet, kāmam abhidhīyatāṁ)[4]. In spite of his definite inclination towards giving the empirical world validity in a greater degree than his contemporaries, more uncompromising in their advaitic stand cared to do, his fundamentally advaitic stand prevents him from accepting the validity of empirical world as absolute and often compels him to enunciate the immediate realisation of supreme truth as the "immediate apprehension of oneness with the pure, ver-undisturbed knowledge, from which the disturbing appearance

1. 63, 2 to 63-4.
2. 4, 13.
3. 12, 24 to 13, 2.
4. 13, 3.

of the world of diverstiy has disappeared for ever (darśānaṁ nirasta-samasta-prapañcāvabhāsa-vijñāna-ghanaikatānubhavaḥ)[1]. Sometimes, we actually see him explaining the riddle of existence from the highest level of approach, and asserting that the world of diversity does not really exist (abhūta-dvaita-jāla))[2]. Such instances are however rare. Though beginningless and positive, Padmapāda further points out, avidyā can be put to an absolute end by the vidyā. The latter in its very act of rising annihilates the former in its entirety[3]. The essentially advaitic stand of Padmapāda's philosophical outlook becomes once more manifest, when he, developing the doctrine of salvation as enunciated by his illustrious teacher, emphatically maintains that supreme liberation is not a state of being previously non-achieved, which can be achieved later on by an individual self through some action. Absolute freedom from the snares of avidyā on the part of the self of the mumukṣu being eternally self-accomplished (nitya-sidhdha), it cannot be reated as such by either the strict observance of the Vedica njunctions or the devotional contemplation on Brahman- Had the mokṣa been something different from what it esseni cially is, i. e., recognition of the true self, eternally present yet unrecognized as such during the saṁsārāvasthā, had it been, say, a boon bestowed upon the seeker by some high deity known as Brahman, it would have been subject to end. Nor do the sacred texts furnish us with any indication that the immediate realisation of Brahman needs some intermediary action to bring about the attainment thereof. To realise it is to be it. And this Upaniṣadic stand remains unjustified if attainment of Brahma-hood is regarded as the fruit of the realisation thereof Indeed, what the difficult process of contemplation actually. aims at, is the removal of the impure mithyājñāna (i.e., the indescribable avidyā-śakti), which has from times beginningless, veiled away from the Jīva his fundamental identity with Brahman.

1. 93, 25 to 94, 1.
2. 1, 1st verse.
3. 37, 7 to 37; 14.

Therefore, attainment of Brahma-hood on the part of the sādhaka is not an accomplishment of a thing unaccomplished before, but a recognition of a truth eternally existent yet thought of as non-existent under the veiling influence of avidyā, concludes he.

This brid's-eye-view of the philosophical outlooks maintained by the prominent philosophers in the immediate post-Śankara period, reflects the rich diversity of lines along which the Advaitic thought-current was given a powerful impetus by Śankara gradually began to develop. The somewhat fluid position of the AV. doctrines, which we have noticed in the philosophical outlook as maintained by Śankara, can be reasonably held as responsible for the intense activity that characterised the Advaitic thought immediately after the flourish of that great thinker. A detailed analysis of the chief facets of these prominent post-Śankara AV. traditions and a comparison thereof with the parallel points in Śānkara philosophy, as viewed in the previous chapter, clearly shows the principal point of difference between the two. It is not so much an appearance of an altogether a novel doctrine in the former, as the new definite lines, where-along the former try to give a crystal-clear form to the principal Advaitic tenets, left in a some what vague and fluid condition by the latter. This process of systematisation and crystallisation, though far from being perfect and finished yet undeniably prominent, can be clearly detected in the case of each and every principal Advaitic tenet. It is, however, althemore explicit in the context of the most controversial, subtle and flexible of all the Advaitic principles, i. e., the principle of Māyā. The vague and manysided character of Māyā, as enunciated in the philosophy of the great teacher, gave rise to a rich variety of interpretations among his disciples. Though not so emphatic and sharply dissimilar to eah other in the beginning, this divergence of interpretations gradually grew clearer with march of time, and finally crystalized into separate schools. It would be, hence, certainly a mistake of exaggeration to read in the principal representatives of this earlier epoch of post-Śankara

development of AV. thought, all the fine subtleties of conception of Māyā, characteristic of each and every school. These form, as a matter of fact, an outstanding feature of the latter epoch. It might be perhaps due to this reason that the later philosophers, whose main aim was to present in a systematic manner the AV. doctrines in their fully matured forms, went so far as to ignore the fundamental sources of these post-Śankara tendencies, and to attribute the latter to the later authorities, who commented upon these original works and brought out the views implicitly expressed in them in a form at once distinguishable. Thus, the views on the problems of locus of avidyā, as entertained by Maṇḍana, are more widely attributed to his commentator, Vācaspati, who seems to have elaborated them in his commentary on *Brahmasiddhi*, and has tried to read them in the philosophical scheme of Śankara himself, in his famous *Bhāmati*. In the same way, the distinguishing tendencies that are discernible to the critical eye in the philosophical outlook maintained by Padmapāda, are attributed to his commentator, the author of Vivaraṇa. This is not to belittle the value of the contribution of these later authorities; but it is only to draw one's attention to the vague nature of these new tendencies at their original source. A comparative study of these three prominent traditions, to proceed further, reveals a yet another interesting feature of the evolution of the conception of Māyā in post-Śankara times, which deserves a special notice. All these traditions, let it be stated at the very out-set, try to reconcile the truth of diversity of being that is actually given in perception with that of unity of being, which is fundamental through the adoption of the Vyāmiśra Dṛṣṭi, if one may use the characteristic phrase coined by Sarvajñātman, and of Vivarta-Vāda as the only logically consistent causal relation between the two. Though thus all of the three traditions try to solve the riddle of existence from common plane which forms the middle stage between the two extremities of Pariṇāma and Apavāda, the philosophical outlook, afforded by each of these traditions, is strongly influenced by the degree of emphasis and importance

each of them attaches to the noumenal reality. This had its own inevitable repercussions on the elucidation of the two lower phases of reality. Thus, the tradition of Sureśvara and Sarvajñātman, with its uncompromising 'eka-cidāśrita-ekājñāna-vāda' and 'eka-jīva-vāda', marks the higher stratum of the middle stage, which has got closer affinity with the Ajāta-vāda. Chiefly concerned with the elucidation of transcendental reality, the immediate realisation whereof constitutes the 'summum bonum', this tradition does not care so much to give a detailed explanation of the empirical reality. Consequentially, Māyā, in its eyes, is hardly more than a medium, through which the supreme reality, the cit, one without second, appears as many. One can easily contrast this view with that maintained by Padmapāda tradition. For, while in the former it is hardly a substance with its own character, in the latter, it almost assumes an appearance of an independent entity. The position of Maṇḍana in this respect is not so clear. It seems to form an intermediary stage between the two views afore-mentioned. His ready acceptance of all the inconsistencies in the principle of avidyā makes him seem more favourably inclined towards the stand of Sureśvara. True, this difference does not deeply affect the stands maintained by these three schools on ontological problems. For, all of them are strictly faithful to the Upaniṣads-old doctrine of Brahman, one without second. It does however cast its own influence over the further evolution of Advaitic thought in later periods. Yet another interesting point of divergence of opinion as regards the conception of Māyā is the problem of its locus and object. In this respect, the position of Maṇḍana can be easily contrasted with that of Sureśvara and Sarvajñātman. While the former openly advocates Jīva as the locus and Brahman as the object of avidyā, and thus seems to favour the 'aneka-mumukṣu-vāda', the latter shows in details the inconsistencies, inherent in this stand, propounds Ātman as both the locus and the object of ajñāna, and thus upholds the 'eka-jīva-vāda'. The position of Padmapāda in this respect is not so clear. While there are some indications that present

Padmapāda as favourably inclined to the Jīvāśrita-avidyā view[1], there are also undeniable statements[2], which point to the contrary. Some statements, on the other hand, are highly debatable and can be construed in favour of either side by a slight change in the method of their interptretation.[3]. On the whole, however, he seems to favour the Sureśvara view, in this respect. For, he now and then emphatically maintains that it is against the ground of Sentience that the avidyā develops into the principle of immediate ego. The ego, illuminated by the Sentience that forms its non-this element, is known as Jīva (parameśvarādhiṣṭhitāvalabdha-pariṇāma-viśeṣaḥ). In spite of these differences in opinion, which are responsible for the growth of the later Vācaspati school and Vivaraṇa school, these traditions have much in common, as regards not only the general defence of the AV. doctrines against the spirited attacks of the Mīmāṅsakas etc., or the enunciation of the essential character of noumenal reality, but also many of the general characteristics of such a highly flexible principle as Māyā. They, one and all, display a gradually developing maturity of conception. In the representative works of this earlier epoch of post-Śankara evolution of advaitic thought, one often comes across the finer distinctions in the implications of the terms used as synonymous with each other in the earlier epoches, to denote the principle of Māyā. And this significantly indicates a growing inclination towards subtler elaboration of the AV. doctrines, already firmly established against the onslaughts of the rival systems of thought by that greatest advaitin of all times, viz., Śankarācārya.

1. Vide:—14, 19 to 14, 20,
2. 20, 16.
3. 15, 1.

## Chapter IV

# CONTRIBUTION OF VĀCASPATI MIŚRA TO THE ADVAITA PHILOSOPHY

It was in the concluding phases of this first epoch of post-Śankara evolution of the advaitic thought in general and the doctrine of Māyā in particular, that there flourished an illustrious philosopher, whose original and unique contribution to the advaitic philosophy, particularly the doctrine of Māyā, gradually came to acquire permanent significance and widespread importance with march of time. For, in the shining galaxy of the great advaitic thinkers of the post-Śankara times, the place of Pandit Vācaspati Miśra, the author of the celebrated commentaries on the Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śankara and the Brahma-Siddhi of Maṇḍan Miśra is by no means a secondary one. Such a profound and deep has been his influence over the later epoch in the evolution of advaitic thought, indeed, that he has been unanimously held in great respect, and is actually mentioned as 'ācārya' by the advaitic philosophers of the later times[1]. An origin of a separate school of thought, known as 'Jīvāśrita- avidyā-pakṣa', the beginnings whereof can be actually traced to even a pre-Vācaspati period, as we have seen in brief herebefore, is attributed to him, and he is also undisputedly held as the originator of the famous Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda. How far these attributions can be held rationally valid and sound, we shall presently see in details, but even a most sceptically-minded critic will have to accept the high position Vācaspti enjoys among the Advaita Vedāntins of first order. Indeed, one can even go further and assert, without the least fear of courting exaggeration, that Vācaspati's greatness as a profound and original thinker, an erudite scholar, and a versatile philosopher, exceeds the domain

1. Vide:—SLS, page 9 line 16,

of AV. thought. It actually invades the vast field of ancient Indian philosophy, heterodox as well as orthodox. materialistic as well as immaterialistic. Considered from this point of view, the position of Vācaspati Miśra among the Indian philosophers is almost unique and with a few cases, parallel to it. In every branch of Indian philosophical thought, be it the school of the atomist Naiyāyika or the ritualist Mīmānsaka, or the mystic Yogin, or the subtle Sānkhya, the contribution of Vācaspati Miśra is there, sound, original and influential. His all-embracing interest in the philosophical quest after the ultimate truth of being led him into the objective and fundamental study of not only the orthodox and Hindu modes of thought, but also the heterodox and non-Hindu systems of deliberations, such as Buddhist and Jain, which, by the time of his flourish, had achieved great perfection of details and precision of expression, and were engaged in an intense series of clashes with the orthodox schools of thought, Vedic and Vedāntic. And, as a result of this all-comprehensive search after the Reality, Vācaspati contributed to the rich treasures of Indian philosophy a number of original works in every system. Though approaching the problem of existence from different grounds, angles and planes, though employing different methods of investigations, his contributions as a rule, never fail to reflect the intense desire to face the fundamental truth of one's being, the profound philosophical genius, and the never-missing discerning attitude that has an irresistible aptitude for reality are some of the outstanding characteristics of Vācaspati the philosopher. It is not possible here for the author of the present thesis to go into subtle details as regards the character of Vācaspati's contribution to the system of Ancient Indian philosophy other than Advaita Vedānta. For, it is both beyond the scope of the present work and is besides without any bearing on the current theme; but, let it suffice to state that the significance of his many-sided cantribution to the Indian philosophical literature is unanimously accepted by not only the thinkers of middle ages, but also the modern critics of Indian philosophy, impartial in their objective assess-

ment of reality. A detailed study of the principal works of Vācaspati in the systems other than Advaita Vedānta, when undertaken with an unbiased mind, strikes one with a highly possible facet of his philosophical attitude in general, which deserves a fair consideration. For, it might help a student of this profound thinker in arriving at some reasonably justifiable conception as regards his *own* final approach to the riddle of existence. To Vācaspati the various systems of Indian philosophy did not appear as fundamentally different approaches towards the riddle of finite existence, each of them, perfect in itself, dependent on itself, deriving nothing from or contributing nothing to other sister-systems. In stead of this, our philosopher seems to be conscious of the underlying unity of approach hat binds the orthodox schools, and renders them inter-complimentary. Though dealing with the problem of life in all its aspects, he actually asserts[1], each school of thought has a special contribution of its own to make to the knowledge about, the unknown, and in it *alone* lies its sole validity and fulfilment, and not in its other aspects. From this assertion, one can say, Vācaspati seems to hint that in his eyes the different syystems of Indian philosophy are rather different stages of Indian thought gradually evolving, developing and finally culminating in the subtlemost all-comprehensive philosophy of Advaita Vedānta. It is true that none among his works on separate schools of philosophy provides one with any amount of direct textual evidence to justify the assumption recorded above. For, each one of them is earnestly concerned with the task of developing the fundamental tenets of the system and defending it against the attacks of others. Nevertheless the order by which his works seem to have come forth, as well as certain other factors, indicated above, do hint towards this possibility, at once significant and dynamic. That the philosophical outlook preached by Advaita Vedānta is, according to him, the culmination of the philosophical quest, seems beyond doubt as soon as one considers the place of his AV. works in the order of his contributions, as well as the zeal

1. Vide:—Bha. 352, 2 to 352, 7.

and fervour with which he elucidates the AV. tenets, and the spirit with which he criticizes the contrary views. And this fact, based though it is on a largely speculative reasoning, has got a special significance for the student of Miśra's contribution to AV. school of thought. Because, not only it explains his intense interest in the monistic interpretation of the riddle of existence, but also presents uncompromising monism as his *own* philosophy of life, arrived at through an elaborate process or reasoning and evaluating. Unfortunately, however, for a prope appreciation of the monistic outlook, as cherished by Miśra, we have access to only one of his principal works on Vedāntaf viz., the famous *Bhāmatī*, unanimously accepted as one of the most authoritative commentaries on the great Brahma-Sūtra Bhāṣya of Śaṅkarācārya. Many of his contributions to AV. school of poilosophy, such as 'Brahma-tattva-samīkṣā', 'Vedānta-tattva-kaumudī', 'Brahma-tattva-saṁhitoddīpinī', etc. known through references in the works of Vācaspati himself or other later writers, have been virtually lost to us, and thus Bhāmatī, his only work extant, becomes the only source of information as regards the monistic view upheld and cherished by him. Bhāmatī, however, does not fail to re-pay in abundance the labours of a critical study thereof with a view to gather a fairly accurate and generously comprehensive conception of Miśra's advaitic outlook. For, though of a nature of a commentary and hence deprived of many an adventage which an independent work is naturally entitled to, Bhāmatī does not fail, as we shall presently discuss in details, to reflect, and quite distinctly too, the monistic view of life in its vital aspects, as elucidated by Miśra. Not only this, Bhāmatī, coming at the end of a unique and glorisous career of a versatile philosophical genius, shows Vācaspati the thinker, the commentator, the critic, the scholar, the writer at his best. Considered from the point of view, Bhāmatī assumes an almost undeniable significance that far surpasses all other works of his, and an indispensible importance, which even a student of Miśra's contribution to other systems of philosophy, cannot afford to deny

or neglect. Covering a very wide field of discussion that embraces the problem of life in almost all of its phases, exchanging, now and then, hot fire with other modes of philosophical quest after the truth, the great Bhāṣya of Śankara gives Vācaspati a unique opportunity to display his encyclopaedic range of profound erudition, which knows no restrictions of system and school, and which excels in unraveling the complex and subtle intricacies, be they then of a difficult theological character[1], or connected with a complicated problem in Vedic occultism[2]. The commentator in Vācaspati derives a great help from the scholar in him; and what strikes the student of Bhāmatī more forcibly than anything else, is the studied elaboraton that Vācaspati brings to wait upon the themes, not only Vedāntic in character, and hence to be defended and developed, but also non-Vedāntic and therefore due for immediate adverse criticism and ultimate outright dismissal. This happy characteristic has tended to render the study of the Bhāmatī not only indispensible for a serious student of Vedāntic thought, but also of immense help for the proper understanding of the equally subtle rival systems like those of Buddhistic nihilism or subjectivism[3], or the elastic theory of Syādvāda of Jain philosophy[4]. Equally illuminating are the detailed statements of the fundamental stand of the rival orthodox currents of thought, such as Sānkhya[5] or Nyāya[6]. There is many an instence, where his sound and fundamental grasp over the ritualistic philosophy of Mīmānsā in all its intricaaies[7], or his deep acquaintance with the highly subtle doctrines of the grammarians, such as Sphoṭa[8], shine forth unmistakably. Though subject to the limitations of a commentator and hence compelled to fall in line with the general

1. 595,2 to 596, 9.
2. 266, 2 to 266, 17.
3. Vide:—Bha. 449, to 479.
4. 480, 1 to 487.
5. 412, 1 to 429, 11.
6. 499 12 tc 449, 5.
7. 715, 5 to 719 31.
8. 254 8 to 260 8.

trend of the subject-contents of the Bhāṣya, Vācaspati often transcends these limits, and not only displays himself as endowed with a unique quality of sound interpretation by explaining away the seemingly inexplicable incongruities in the original texts of the Bhāṣya[1], but also shows his independent power of criticism that does not spare even the revered Bhāṣyakāra himself[2]. True to his own conscience, he never hesitates to pass his own judgment over the opinions expressed by Śankara himself[3], or to show with irrefutable logic, the unsound character of the arguments put forward by the revered Bhāṣyakara[4]. Sometimes he even goes to the extent of exposing the inherent weakness of the stand maintained by the authority he is commenting upon, and then proceeds to justify the original position with his own independent and original reasoning[5]. To do him justice, however, Vācaspati, the author of Bhāmatī, as interpreter is unmistakably more powerful than the critic; and the great commentator is always anxious to bring out the richness of conception, profundity of view and the depth of imagination of the greatest Advaitin of all times in their entirety. This singular combination of originality of judgment, versatility of genius and depth of insight into reality sought to be grasped, happily conspired together to bring forth in the person of Pandit Vācaspati Miśra, one of the greatest and the brightest stars in the firmament of AV. literature.

When one turns, with so much introductory acquaintance with Vācaspati, the philosopher as seen through his celebrated Bhāmatī, to the critical study of the Advaitic outlook on life as maintained by him, one is impreassed with an undeniable and obvious fact that the most outstanding contribution to the AV. philosophy Vācaspati can be credited with, is the clarification, elaboration and systematisation of the AV. precepts, already pronounced by the earlier thinkers, and the spirited defence

1. 377 8 to 12.
2. 157, 1 to 158, 5.
3. 29, 5 to 29, 8.
4. 562, 4 to 564, 4.
5. Vide:—Bha. 622, 8.

of them against the onslaughts of rival currents of thought. This does not mean that he did not contribute anything original and new to the evolution of monistic philosophy. Widely acclaimed as the first propogetor of two important doctrines, wiz., Jīvāśrita-Avidyā-Vāda and Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣti-Vāda, Vācaspati cannot be denied that credit. It only means to reflect the general trend of his great work. But, one can ever be surer only on a closer and a clearer view of the details of the Advaitic philosophy as upheld by him.

The enunciation of ultimate truth of being, Brahman, as undertaken during the philosophical discussions in Bhāmatī, is more interesting and noteworthy for the more refined and more logical arguments adopted to maintain the monistic stand against the repeated attacks of rival systems of thought than for some startling new facets of the original doctrine. None can reasonably and honestly doubt the existence of the ultimate truth of being, points he[1], in as much as it is actually vouchsafed by the existence of the penultimate truth of our every-day life. The relative validity of our empirical existence, actually vouchsafed by our every-day experience, would not have been there, had it not been sustained by the absolute validity of something absolutely beyond relativity. Even the Mādhyamika Buddhist, the advocate of nihilism, when compelled to account for the conditional truth of empirical life, could not help accepting the Śūnyaṁ as the unconditional truth. Call it by whatever name you like, asserts he, but it is there, indisputable and undeniable in its existence. For, the very appearance of the complex show of universe is a sure indication towards its ground. Just as it is impossible to conceive of an illusory serpent without any sort of ground in the from of a rope etc., it is illogical to propound the phenomenal validity of the world, without having accepted any thing of noumenal truth, as the sustaining ground thereof. Verily it is the immanent existence of this ultimate truth, the Ātman, that imparts a semblance of

1. 96, 17 to 19.

existence and an appearance of validity to the ever-changing world-appearance, essenceless in itself[1]. The universe in all its aspects is of the character of a superposition on the Ātman, owing its rise and existence to avidyā, and as such, does not, even when itself sublated, necessarily lead to the sublation of the latter, i. e., the Ātman. For, the very fact of sublation undeniably implies the existence of a thing beyond sublation[2]. Nor is this ultimate truth, he proceeds further, a thing that can only be guessed and never realised. For, the immediate realisation of it constitutes the only means of transcending grief and pain, known as saṁsāra. The sacred texts that sing of it as bein 'avāk-manasa-gocaraṁ', i. e. beyond the range of Speech and even Mind, only mean to emphasise that it cannot be apprehended in an ordinary way, in which the empirical things, such as cow etc., are grasped. They do not however, deny the possibility of its being apprehended even in an indirect way, i. e., through the denial of diversity of being as only apparent and not real[3]. Besides this, the existence of the noumenal reality turns to be undebatable as soon as one recalls that the sentience, which is his own self, is, neither the attribute of his gross or subtle body, nor the characteristic of the elements that go to make his body, but is of the character of the very nature of the self-same truth, argues Vācaspati. He shows in details how the Sentience cannot be reasonably maintained as pertaining to matter i. e. Prakṛti, in however refined a form it might be[4]. Thus, being of the nature of essential reality of one's being, it is called Ātman. Never object by itself, it is always the subject. The eternal illuminator of each and every object-cognition, it is itself never subject to doubt, misapprehension, imagination, though it illuminates them, when pertaining to the non-self world. The universally accepted fact of its always being present in every mode of cognition irresistibly

1. Vide:—Bha. 86, 23 to 87, 5.
2. 654, 4 to 654, 7.
3. 655, 2 655-4.
4. 767, 1 to 767, 12.

points to its self-manifest character (anāgantuka-prakāśatā)[1]. Had its sentience been a temporary effect, brought about by some external factors, and hence casual, the Ātman would never have been ever-manifest by nature, and thence would have been subject to doubt and denial. But none, not even a most perverted one, as a matter of fact, denies or doubts his own self[2]. The relations with the gross and the subtle bodies that the Ātman seems to have, are not real(vāstava), but otherwise in the ultimate sense of the word. Because they owe their rise and existence to the false knowledge (mithyājñāna); had they been real, nothing, not even the knowledge of highest truth, would have been able to put an end to it and thus secure for the seeker supreme liberation from pain. It is from this point of view that the divine texts, singing of the enlightened soul of a Jīvan-mukta as 'without body' (aśarīra), even during the remaining span of empirical life, can be reasonably explained, asserts Vācaspati[3]. Being the very essential truth of being, both subjective and objective, Ātman naturally transcends the categories of the desirables and the undesirables (upādeyānupādeya-paraḥ). He is, therefore, beyond the range of injunction and prohibition, whether authoritative or ordinary. Because, freedom of personal will or choice (puruṣasvātantrya), which is implicitly taken for granted by the acceptance or its opposite the denial is nowhere to be found in the case of this essential truth of being which can be neither accepted nor denied[4]. The relation between Ātman and Sentience or Ātman and pure knowledge is not that of substance and attribute, as the followers of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools propound, but of complete identity, states he. He proceeds to point out that all the statements in the Upaniṣadic texts that seem to treat Ātman and Sentience or knowledge as mutually different yet related in some way, should not be taken at their primary meaning[5].

1. 475, 3 to 475, 6.
2. 529, 4 to 530, 2.
3. 95, 1 to 95, 7.
4. 87, 12 to 87, 14.
5. Vide:—Bha. 87, 12 to 87, 14; 18, 17.

Existence (i. e., Sattā), which cannot be logically maintained as either 'capacity for imparting either joy or sorrow' (artha-kriyā-kāritā) as the Buddhists have done, or as 'an independent entity' as the Vaiśeṣikas have propounded, is again the character of being beyond sublation in all times, past, present and future (trikālābādhyatvaṁ sattvaṁ). It is, as such, the very nature of the self-same transcendental reality, i. e., the Ātman. For, none among the things that are given in our sense-perception during the two lower phases of life, empirical and phenomenal, can be undisputedly propounded as being ever beyond negation, either in time nor in space. Again the undeniable and fundamental fact that they all are endowed with a conditional and hence unreal existence, is conclusively pointed out by their abject dependence on the knowledge thereof. Entirely different however is the case with the Ātamn; being ever present in all types of cognition in all the three states being, known as Jāgrat, Svapna and Suṣupti, Ātman is truly existent; because illuminator of everything else, it is never illuminated by something else; cognizer of sublation of everything else in due time, course and place, it is never sublated. Indeed, it is the eternal and omnipresent existence (Sattā) of the Ātman that imparts a semb lanceof existence and reality to the show of infinite finite beings, known as saṁsāra, which is otherwise inexplicable and undeniable[1]. Though thus constituting the essential truth of one's being, the Ātman, warns the philosopher, should not be confused with one's ego, that is given in the cognition—'I'. This would be a gross mistake, the followers of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools of thought have been guilty of. For, the self, as seen through ego-cognition (ahamkāra-vṛtti) is mutually different from the self, the transcendental; the former is subject to limitations, to impurity, to finitude, to pain and pleasure; but the latter is eternally above and beyond all limits, is ever-pure, infinite and of the nature of Bliss, unpolluted by pain[2], asserts Vācaspati

1. Bha. 13, 14 to 17.
2. 6, 7 to 9.

on the authority of the revealed texts. Had both the selves been identical with each other, there would have been no scope left for the philosophical quest after the reality of one's being. For, the ego-self is ever an object of immediate realisation for every animate being. Nor would it have been ever possible for the self of the seeker to transcend finitude and impurity. For, these in the given case would have to be accepted as rooted in his very nature and hence irremedible. The contention of the Naiyāyika that though inherent in the Ātman from times beginningless, the attributes of pain and pleasure, vice and virtue, are put to an absolute end through the realisation of the highest truth is simply illogical and hence unacceptable. For, it is totally impossible for a thing to forgo its real nature without courting total destruction of its own self[1]. The character of knower or cognizer (pramātṛtva) which has been attributed to the Ātman herebefore, is also but an assessment of the transcendental reality from an empirical point. For, the character of cognizer is mutually dependent on the two remaining members of the trinity of which the whole universe is composed, viz., the cognition and the object thereof. These two members of the trinity being but of a conditional validity, how can the first one be of unconditional thruth? Again, the freedom of activity (vyāpāra-svātantrya) which is implicit in the character of cognizer, is inconsistent with the fundamental nature of the Ātman, who is transformation-less-ly erternal, all-prevading, and hence devoid of any empirical activity (kriyā). Hence all the descriptions of Ātman as doer, knower, witness or illuminator, should be necessarily taken in their secondary (lākṣaṇika) meaning[2], and they stand justified only when taken as indirectly hinting at that immanent truth, which, taken by itself, is neither cognizer, nor a cognition, nor an object thereof, but out of which alone the latter trinity derives its sustenance. The very fact that the Ātman is ever present in all phases and planes of life,

1. 7, 7 to 8, 7.
2. 20, 8 to 21, 1.

and is beyond the scope of time, necessarily signifies its non-casual (anāgantuka) validity. For, only those things, which are subject to the not'on of past, present and future, can be said to be casual (āgantuka). Like the things that are definitely non-existent (atyanta-asat), e.g., a barren wóman's son, the Ātman can be definitely explained in his true nature (nirvacanīya), he further points out. For, though marking two extremities entirely opposite to each other, both the entirely non-existent things and the eternally existent things have one thing in common, viz., a definitely definable character (nirvacanīyatā). The things of empirical validity, however, cannot be defined either as existent, because they are subject to sublation in past and future, or as non-existent, because they are actually given in perception in the present. Hence, they are said to be undefinable. Ātman however can be clearly defined as ever-existent, ever-present and never-deviating from his fundamental nature[1]. Having thus spoken of the noumenal reality as the essential truth of one's being, Vācaspati also develops it as the immanent truth, sustaining the complex show of the incessant process of finite existences known as saṁsāra. All-prevading, partless, eternal, changeless and self-fulfilled, known as Brahman, i. e., the Great one, because of its omnipresent character, and as Ātman, because it constitutes the very self of each and everything[2], it is of the character of unlimited Bliss and knowledge, and is, assisted by the inexplicable two-fold avidyā-śakti, the source of the entire universe in all of its multifarious phases, gross or subtle. The sacred Vedas, the treasures of divine as well as spiritual knowledge are but a breath of it; the great cosmic entities like earth etc. are but a glance thereof; the cosmos in its animate as well as inanimate phases is but a smile of it; and the great dissolution (mahā-pralaya) is its deep sleep[3]. This view of the transcendental reality, which is essentially

1. Vide:—Bha. 509, 6.
2. 73, 21 to 26.
3. 1, 1st verse and 2nd verse.

cosmic and all-comprehensive, warns the philosopher, is however 'aupādhika'. Because it concerns itself with the immanent truth as subjected (of course, falsely) to the adjunct of impure avidyā. There is yet another, an a-cosmic, an all-exclusive and a more fundamental view of the self-same ultimate truth. This view, instead of approaching the noumenal reality through the medium of avidyā, like the former, one tries, as far as possible, to grasp it in its essential nature, through the negation of the āvidyaic attributes, generally superposed on it[1]. Of these cosmic and a-cosmic, all-inclusive and all-exclusive conceptions of ultimate reality, the Brahman, he argues in details, the latter alone is true. To accept the cosmic view too as real is to accept the noumenal reality as subject to real transformation, and thus to face irreconcilable contradiction of the declarations of the revealed authority. The acceptance of the all-exclusive (nirviśeṣa) view does not necessarily dismiss the scriptural statements, preaching the all-inclusive view, as entirely purposeless and baseless. Because, the all-inclusive view forms an intermediary stage between the infinite diversity of being, that is given in actual perception, on one hand, and the infinite unity of being, that is on the authority, the fundamental truth of being, on the other. The cosmic view of ultimate reality is, therefore, undoubtedly of immense value and significance, in as much as, it gradually introduces a tendency to read unity in diversity and thus helps the seeker after the truth to transcend diversity as only apparent and hence false and behold the real unity, unconditional and pure[2]. The all-comprehensive cosmic view of the transcendental reality concerns itself with the topmost ring in the ladder of empirical realities of varying degree of validity and truth. Nor it is absolutely without a logical basis. As all the features of empirical life derive their sustenance from the immanent Brahman, it is, to a great extent at least, logical to view the latter as endowed with the former.

1. Vide:—Bhag. 42, 6 to 42, 10.
2. 641, 3 to 641, 10.

What is meant by insisting upon the all-exclusive a-cosmic view as the final one, is that the other cannot be held to be the ultimate view in as much as it is of the nature of a superposition, on however a refined plane it may be. This, of course, does not under-estimate the value of the cosmic conception in the discipline of self-realisation, where, with the help of the conception, the noumenal reality is sought to be made an object of devotional contemplation[1]. Turning to the problem of the transcendental reality in its relation with the empirical one, Vācaspati maintains that since the empirical reality, consisting of names and forms, is never apprehended, as entirely divorced from the Sentience, the former is fundamentally identical with the latter. Indeed, the latter is the very essence of the former, 'as is the conch-shell of the silver'. And this is the only plausible explanation of the revealed Upaniṣadic texts, such as 'Tasmin Vijñāte sarvam idaṁ vijñātaṁ bhavati', texts, which declare that the moment the ultimate reality is realised the entire empisical universe becomes known. For, a thing can be said to have been known in its entirety only when its fundemental truth is thoroughly grasped. Concealed indeed remains the ultimate truth of life from the unfortunate one, who lets himself deceived by the apparent truth thereof, and believes in diversity of self and non-self[2]. That the difference between the fundamental and the apparent truths of being is but superficial and hence unreal, is also conclusively pointed out by the revealed fact that prior to its appearance, the latter subsist ( of course, dormantly ) in the former. It is out of Brahman, say the texts, that in the beginning of creation the empirical universe comes into existence, first in the form of name and then in that of form ( rūpa-dheya ); and it is into it again that at the end thereof it merges. And even on empirical plane of experience, no body disputes the fact that a thing, which emerges out of another thing, which is never apprehended

1. Vide:—Bha. 133, 1 to 133, 3.
2. 328, 15 to 329, 6.

without the least apprehension of it, and which submerges again thereinto, is essentially identical[1]. It is because of the submergence of the entire universe in the Brahman that the latter is spoken of as 'the greatest of all' or 'the abode of everything that exists'[2]. In a very illuminating and interesting discussion, Vācaspati again tries to refute the dualistic theory of the Sāṃkhyas, who accept the diversity and the unity, both as equally real, and try to reconcile the mutually-contradictory notions of them, as presented in the cognition of each and every object, through the adoption of the doctrine of identity-in-difference ( bhedābheda-vāda ). He points out at length the inherent weaknesses and irremediable inconsistencies involved in this apparently plausible stand of the Sāṃkhya. He opines that it is impossible to maintain both unity and diversity as equally real, that one must ultimately discard either complete unity, as owing its rise to the ignorance of the other and hence unreal, and concludes, with strong arguments in favour of his own stand that among the two the diversity alone is unreal, in as much as it derives its sustenance from fundamental unity, by veiling which alone it has managed to have a semblance of valid existence[3]; and that unity is called 'Brahman', because of its all-pervading character. As the revealed texts such as 'Tat aikṣata', speak of the ultimate cause of the universe as sentient and omni-scient by character, the theories that propound the non-sentient pradhāna or the sentient individual souls as the cause (Kartā) of the creation, are entirely baseless. It is the Brahman, which, because of its nature of pure knowledge, fits in well with the descriptions of the divine texts. In spite of its being fundamentally pure, unlimited and free from all empirical activity, it yet assumes, through beginningless, inexplicable power of avidyā, the role of both the material and the efficient causes of the saṁsāra[4].

1. 329, 7 to 392, 16.
2. 136, 9 and 10.
3. Vide:—Bha. 72, 2 to 73, 21.
4. 103, 1 to 103, 36.

The phenomenon of the emergence of the impure, limited and painful samsāra out of Brāhman does not imply any change in the fundamental character of the latter, in as much as it, just like that of the emergence of a serpent out of a piece of rope, is but apparently real,-cautions Vācaspati. And that is the reason why all this talk about Brahman as being both the material cause (upādāna) and the efficient cause (nimitta), does not lead one into the contradiction of the fundamentally pure nature thereof, propounded above. Had the causal character of Brahman been real in the unconditional sense of the word, it would have inevitably brought about some change in Brahman, either in parts (which is impossible, in as much as it is partless) or in the whole (which also is impossible because in that case the whole Brahman would have been something else than itself). Both the causes are however denied by the essential nature of Brahman which has been emphatically established by the revealed texts as eternally changeless[1]. As an explanation of this seemingly inconsistent stand as regards the causal character of transcendental reality, he points to the inexplicable avidyā ( character and position whereof in the philosophical scheme of Vācaspati, we shall discuss in details in due course and place ) and states in clear terms that it is the Brahman, taken together with this indescribable ( anirvacanīya ) avidyā, that forms the material cause of the universe ( avidyāsahita-Brahmopādānaṁ hi jagat )[2]. And, since avidyā is inexplicable, its association with Brahman (indispensible for emergence, existence, and submergence of the empirical universe) is also inexplicable, and the effect of their association, i. e. the samsāra, is also inexplicable. Though the association with avidyā is vitally necessary on the part of the ultimate reality for the act of creation, that does not make little of the causal importance of Brahman, in as much as it alone is the original cause of all inexplicable effect[3]; the rest are of

1. Vide:—Bha. 342, 4 to 342, 7.
2. 54, 7.
3. 466, 1 to 3.

but an auxiliary character; Even during the process of creation, the Brahman plays the double role of a constituent cause as well as an efficient cause, he further points out. For, though association with avidyā (avidyā-sahakāritā) is common to both the capacities, Brahman in the first case provides the material for the creation in the form of Space etc. in which it has transformed itself, and in the second it functions as the presiding superintendent of the whole process[1]. Thus, the stand, offered by Vācaspati Miśra over the problem of causal character of Brahman has many a point in common with that of a protagonist of the cosmic or rather transformationist view. So close has been indeed this similarity between our philosopher's view and the view of the transformationist, that had it not been for one divergent characteristic of his stand, i. e., the uureality of everything else than pure self, be it then its causal character or its transformation into elementary cosmic entities like Space etc., it would have been permissible to equate it to that of a pariṇāma-vādin. Taking however the facts as they are, Vācaspati's stand presents a highly developed stage of the Vivarta view, and is quite faithful to the fundamentals of his monistic philosophy. Though thus Brahman is the essential truth of the empirical life, states Vācaspati, it is in the form of the latter that the former presents itself; and not the latter in the form of the former. For, the moment the empirical truth is recognised in its fundamental reality, i. e., the transcendental truth, it ceases being empirical, and the whole show verily known as Samsāra, is over. This does not, of course, mean that simply because it is not apprehended in its true colours, the noumenal reality does not exist during the empirical phase of existence. For, does the piece of rope not exist even during the state of its being apprehended as a snake ? ( bhujaṅga-daśāyāṁ na nāsti vāstavī rajjuh )[2]. The negation of diversity (bheda) between the empirical and transcendental

1. 520,2 to 520, 4.
2. Vide:—Bha. 162, 15 to 163, 3.

realities, likewise, only means that whatever is given in perception is ultimately nothing but Brahman, and not that the ultimate truth, viz. Brahman, is everything that is given in perception, too. For, while the former is in complete harmony with advaitism, the latter, the reverse of the former, is baseless—simply because Brahman is not cognised in its entirety during the samsārāvasthā[1]. Though Brahman forms the very basis of empirical existence and is hence immanent in the minutest phase of the universe, in its self-glorious excellence it is manifest (more clearly) among the high and the noble phases of creation because there the radiant satva has a predominance over the restless rajas and the impure tamas. Its immortal glory does not shine forth so much in the lower and ignoble ones because there the dark influence of the overwhelming tamas of avidyā has become successful in concealing ( of course, apparently ) the eternal glory of immanent reality[2]. The varying degrees of effulgence, with which the noumental truth shines out in each and every individual soul, it is further pointed out, are due not to the real nature of that truth ( because, in it there is no variation of effulgence by nature ), but the predominance or otherwise of tamas in the latter. The effulgence of the truth, known as knowledge, Bliss or Power, taken by itself, is ever beyond comparatativity. It is the varying power of receptivity, inherent in each and every individual soul, the receiver of that effulgence, which is responsible for the comparatavity, apparent therein[3]. Of the nature of self-manifest eternal knowledge, it is this very immanent truth, which assumes the appearance of infinite number of subtle object-cognitions during the empirical life; but since the objective world, in all its phases from the transparent Intelligence to gross objects like jar, has no real, independent existence of its own, the diversity of knowledge ( upalabdhi-bhedaḥ ), which is

1. 206, 6.
2. Vide:—Bha. 133, 6 and 7.
3. 118, 2 to 119, 1.

called in that case as object-cognitions, caused by the diversity of objects, also necessarily turns out to be unreal and only apparent. Considered from this transcendental point of view, not only the diversity but also the cognitivity and the objectivity, apprehended in the knowledge turn out to be an empirical truth[1]. Thus, the stand of the Nitya-jñānātma-vādin reflects a deeper and more fundamental approach than that of the Kṣaṇika-vijñānātma-vādin. The latter rests satisfied with the subtle analysis of the ordinary knowledge (upalabdhiḥ) in its diversity of appearances and takes it for the Self. But the former goes deeper. He dismisses the valuation of momentary cognitions as the Self as superficial, and ultimately comes upon one changeless, self-manifest, eternal knowlege, which inexplicably assumes the inexplicable appearances of different cognitions under the inexplicable impact of the inexplicable objects[2]. The stand of the Buddhist, preaching uncompromising nihilism, is also equally untenable, says Vācaspati[3]. For, while it is perfectly possible and logical to show the complex empirical universe as essenceless, through the exposition of its inherent inconsistencies and self-contradictions, as well as its fundamentally illogical character, it being but an inexplicable flimsy product of avidyā, the position turns out entirely different when one tries to assess the ground thereof, viz. the Brahman. For the unconditional absolute validity and immanent existence of Brahman is unchangeably established by both the word of unimpeachable authority and by forceful logic. The very fact of conditional truth of life that is seen, irresistably leads to something beyond which is of unconditional truth[4]. How can, pleads the philosopher, the Buddhist deny the truth of the denyer of truth of everything else ? The well-regulated courses of evolution, transformation and devolution, along which even this flimsy, unde-

1. 768, 3 to 768, 8.
2. 475, 12.
3. 87, 15 to 88,3.
4. Vide:—Bha. 214, 1 and 2,

finable world runs, would also remain unaccountable for without an omni-potent Sentient Being, super-intending the whole complex process[1]. It is totally wide of mark, argues Vācaspati[2], to harp upon the mutual contradiction between the pramāṇas like perception and authority in this connection and to argue that in as much as the latter is dependent upon the former for its very rise and hence is weaker than itself, the unity of being, propounded by the latter, can never countenance the diversity thereof, as vouchsafed by the former. For, the spheres of authenticity enjoyed by these two pramāṇas are totally different. Therefore there is no mutual contradiction as such. Nor is the latter weaker than the former. For, it is for its own origination, and not for its own validity too, that the latter depends upon the former. Indeed, one can even go to the extent of maintaining that even if a mutual conflict between the two means of right cognition, i. e., perception and authority, is accepted, it is the latter that emerges out as the more powerful than the former. The validity of the unconditional reality, he proceeds further, should be beyond doubt and debate, simply because it constitutes the vital-most non-this element in the curious and ultimately undefinable mixture of the self and the non-self, known as Jīvātman. Thus, in however an indirect and distorted form it may be, every body is immediately cognizant of this eternal principle[3]. Though thus forming the essential and fundamental truth of each and every individual Jīvātman, the Brahman, he further points out[4], is never afflicted by the personal affliction and ignorance of the former, because unlike the former, it is ever aware of the āvidyaic character of the samsāra. An objection is sometimes is raised by the critics of Advaitic philosophy that an emergence of a universe of a multifarious attributes and natures out of one single ultimate cause of uniform characters, i.e., the Branman,

1. 281, 8.
2. 6,11 to 7, 7.
3. 18, 10.
4. 346, 1 to 3.

as professed by the advaitins, is against all the rules of causal relation, says Vācaspati[1]. But if this objection is made from transcendental point of view, where the pure all-exclusive Brahman is the only reality, it loses its force because, considered from that point of view there is nothing like an emergence of a universe of multifarious natures out of Brahman. If the objection is made from the lower, the emp rical point of view where the all-inclusiae Brahman, associated with the inexplicable power of avidyā, constitutes the highest truth, it is equally wide of mark, simply because on that plane, Brahman is actually accepted by the Advaitins as being assisted, in its capacity of the creator, with the indescribable power of māyā. And the immediate realisation of this noumenal truth of being alone constitutes the only means of supreme salvation. It is not, however, that the release is something to be created anew or transformed afresh; because in that case it would be doomed to end[3]. It is essantially of the nature of recognition of one's fundamental and unconditional identity with the Brahman a fact, concealed from the seeker by the ve ling avidyā during the state of empirical being. The supreme release therefore can be best described as the removal of that fateful veil of Avidyā[3] and it is in this sense that the ultimate salvation is often characterised as "the attainment of B ahma-hood"; otherwise, the Jīvātman, who is to attain, and the supreme Ātman, which is to be attained, being fundamentally and eternally identical with each other, the characterisation of the supreme salvation as the attainment of Brahmahood on the part of the seeker would be little better than absurd[4]. It is, therefore, at the absolute removal of the veiling avidyā that the sacred texts exhort the seeker after salvation to aim. For, the moment it is removed through patient and pointed concentration on the Self,

1. 396, 1 to 397, 5.
2. 80, 2 to 80, 5.
3. 71, 1.
4. Vide:—Bha. 80, 5 to 80, 10.

ultimately resulting in the immediate realisation thereof, the Brahmahood, which, in spite of its having been ever-obtained, had, up to that time, appeared as though unobtained due to the concealing influence of Ignorance, is, like a misplaced ornament, obtained by the Sādhaka[1].

Like the noumenal reality, the conception of the empirical reality, as elaborated by Vācaspati, also, is at once remarkable for the clearity of conception, subtlety of details, as well as some new significant and important tendencies, appearing for the first time in the evolution of advaitic thought. The term empirical reality embraces, according to Vācaspati, the whole complex phenomenon of finite being. It has at one end the noumenal realiy, i. e., the pure self, the Brahman, operating against the sustaining background of which it assumes the semblance of existence, and as the other the phenomenal one. The phenomenal reality, in spite of its having many a point in common with the empirical one, is gradually regarded as separate therefrom, owing to its peculiar characteristics. Everything non-sentient by nature, everything that is known as 'this', be it then of physical or psychological, gross or subtle, character, including even the transparent Intelligenee or the Ego, commonly mistaken of Self, falls within the category of empirical reality, which is aptly described as 'viṣaya', i. e., the object or 'what makes the unconditional being appear as conditional[2]. He further points out, it is not unconditionally non-existent ( atyantāsat ). Had it been so, it would never have been given, even in an apparently true manner, in our perception. The very fact that it is manifested, however temporarily it may be, places it a step higher than the things, extremely non-existent[3]. Therefore, the doctrine of asat-khyātiḥ, which when applied to the universe-scale, explains the whole phenomenon of empirical being as the appearance of non-

1. 64, 5 to 64 12.
2. 4, 8 to 4, 10.
3. 13, 9 and 10.

existent against the background of non-existent, and thus leads one to uncompromising nihilism, is totally without sound basis. Not a bit better is the stand of the subjectivist Vijñāna-vādin, who, in face of extremely contrary evidence, refuses to accept the extra-apprehensional existence of the empirical things[1]. This, however, does not mean that empirical things enjoy existence in the real sense of the world. The very fact that they come into being at a particular moment, exist for a given span of time and then vanish or that are ever-changing, speaks against such a conclusion. That they are given in perception, is no unimpeachable proof in favour of their unconditional existence; even the objects of phenomenal validity are perceived in their hallucinatory character; but no body rates them as true. Therefore, like its rival, the doctrine, of sat-khyāti, is hardly reasonable. For, it goes to the other extremity and propounds when applied to the problem of essential truth of this world, that the object is as true as the subject, the Self. According to it, the error consists of, not the mis-belief in the real existence of the world, but the failure to grasp the mutual distinction between the two. But such a reading of the problem is equally unreasonable[2]. The truth lies somewhere between these two extremities. Can then the world, which is neither absolutely existent nor totally non-existent, be existent-cum-non-existent ? But, how can the two opposites have one and the same substratum ? Indeed, it is this very consideration of the absurdity of the whole phonomenon that has led the advaitins to accept the doctrine of anirvacanīya-khyāti, and to propound, by applying it to the present problem, the inexplicable character of the whole empirical universe. This doctrine of inexplicability, though seemingly intangible, provides one with the only logical attitude towards the problem. It is besides upheld by the validity thereof, as tested on the level of the phenomenal experience[3]. It is not in respect of existence

1. Vide:—Bha. 13, 17 to 14, 17.
2. 12, 9.
3. 13, 10 to 13, 13.

alone that the universe turns out to be inexplicable. In whatever respect one tries to fathom it to the bottom, the conclusion reached, is always the same. From whatever point you make an approach, sooner or later, it refuses to submit to logical reasoning (vicārāsahatva) and finally betrays its inexplicable character[1]. Vācaspati lays more emphasis on the inexplicability than on the falsity of the empirical universe. In order to justify his ontological stand he often analyses in full details the fundamental problems, concerned with the empirical world, and logically arrives at the ultimate inexplicability of each of them[2]. This world, which, when viewed as distinct from its cause, the Brahman, becomes simply inexplicable, can be explained with an appreciable amount of definiteness, asserts he, when viewed as 'not distinct' therefrom Verily likewise is the case with each and every effect in our empirical order of things. Thus, the existence or the validity, that seems to substantiate the effect, i. e., the world, is nothing but the existence or the validity of its cause, i. e., the Brahman[3]. As regards the doctrine of anekānta, put forward by the Jain philosophers as a highly flexible and reasonable explanation of the problem of essential character of the empirical universe, he flatly ridicules the protagonists of such an unsteady theory. He remarks that mere acceptance of diverse and mutually conflicting possibilities is no way to the assessment of reality of the universe; for it necessarily remains what it is, without being in the least affected by the highly imaginative speculations, put into by others[4]. He never loses the opportunity[5] to expose to the full the weakness, inherent in the stand of the sadasat-kārya-vādins, and concludes that since an object, taken by itself, cannot be said to be either fully existent or fully non-existent, since existence or non-existence cannot be said to be attributes of an object, since it is imposs-

1. Vide.—Bha. 880, 5.
2. 775, 3 to 775, 9.
3. 362, 6 to 663, 3.
4. 483, 1 to 8.
5. 374, 5 to 374, 18.

-ible to view either of them, as mutually distinct from the object, including the universe itself, when viewed as different from its real cause, must be accepted as unanalysable, hence unreal and non-existent in the ultimate sense of the term. This doctrine of inexplicability (anirvacaniyatāvāda) does not necessarily come into conflict with the uninterrupted go-on of the common world, as given in one's day-to-day experience. Because the latter does not essentially depend upon the matter-of-fact knowledge of fundamental realities. Every object in this universe, taken by itself, is unreal (anṛta), simply because it cannot be subjected to logical explanation[1]; and whatever refuses to submit itself to logical test is, without exception, unreal; it has nevertheless got an innermost core of truth, i.e., the Brahman, which is ever above sublation. Thus, the falsity of samsāra, declared by the sacred Upaniṣanic texts, does not deny, according to Vācaspati, an atom of semblance of truth pertaining thereunto, but only lays an emphasis on its conditional character, and contrasts it with the absolute, unconditional truth of noumenal reality[2]. The latter, which is ever present, which is never subject to limitations, imposed by either Time or Space or Diversity, and is hence positively explicable, is the cause of the former, whose apparent and conditional existenee, or subjection to the notions of past, present and future or ever-changing character, ultimately renders it undefinable as such. For, even on our empirical plane of experience, Vācaspati asserts, the relation of cause and effect is ultimately found to be possible, not between two 'explicable' like a rope and a 'shell,' or two 'inexplicables' like an illusory serpent and an illusory silver, or 'an inexplicable and an explicable' such as an illusory serpent and a real rope', but between 'an explicable and an inexplicable'-like a conch-shell and a false piece of silver[3]. Like all the inexplicable effects of phenomenal validity, the samsāra, the

1. Vide:—Bha. 380, 5-6.
2. 731, 5.
3. 513, 8 to 514, 4.

inexplicale effect of the explicable Brahman, is never apprehended as entirely divorced from its immanent cause. It therefore can be safely assumed to be 'not different' therefrom[1]. It is with an express view to lay a definite emphasis on its character of more superposition that Vācaspati often goes to the extremity of refusing the world, that is given in preception, a higher degree of validity than that of a mere hallucinatory appearance. He openly declares—'To tell you the truth, there is nothing like the Error or the Samsara, resulting therefrom', and feeling unsatisfied with even the explanations of the advaitins, dismisses the whole affiair as hopelessly inexplicable ( kimtu sarvametat sarvānupapatti-bhājanatvena anirvacanīyaṁ iti yuktaṁ utpaśyāmaḥ )[2]. This doctrine of inexplicability of Saṃsāra, the undefinable effect of the unanalysable avidyā, deriving its existence from and operating against the sustaining back-ground of explicable Brahman, saves Vācaspati from the difficulties, cxperienced by the followers of other schools of thought, when faced with the problem of possible purpose sought to achieved by and motive working behind the appearance of universal phenomenon. It also strengthens his viverta-view, which almost transcends into the higher realm of that of apavāda. Had the world been a definable reality, the query as regards the purpose, sought to be served by it, would have been legitimate, saya he[3]. It is again because of the māyic character of the complex show of universe that the supreme being ( i. e. Brahman ), inspite of His being the exhibitor of it, can never be reproached with waywardness, partiality of cruelty. But, for those philosophers who maintain the unconditional reality of the world, the unhappy position, just referred to above, becomes unavoidable[4]. All shades of philosophical thought, however divergent may have been their views on the particulars, unanimously agree upon the possibility of supreme release through the realisation

1. 392, 4 to 329, 6.
2. Vide:—Bha. 833, 5-6.
3. 406, 8-9.
4. 408, 7 to 408, 10.

of truth. And, this possibility of absolute and ultimate release can be reasonably accounted for along the lines of the conception of avidyaic character of bondage. Had the bondage been really existent, nothing not even the supreme knowledge, would have been ever capable of turning it into non-existent. Had the saṁsāra, full of diversity, the only source of fear and pain, been an unconditional reality, it would never have been possible for the seeker to transcend fear, and pain, the source thereof being always there. Dissolution of diversity, consequent upon the knowledge of underlying eternal unity, on the other hand, is possible only if the diversity is not of a real character, common to all individual souls, but is a mere superimposition, arising out of avidyā, particular to each one of the individual souls[1]. Though thus the doctrine of conditional truth of the entire samsāra, as accepted by the Māyā-vādin, betrays a close resemblance to that, as de.eloped by the Śūnya-vādin, they are poles apart from each other, warns the philosopher[2]. He then proceeds to discuss in details the irremediable deep inconsistencies in the latter's attempt to establish conditional validity of the world without accepting any principle as of unconditional truth, as the basis thereof, and arrives at an essentially ad aitic conclusion by pointing out that like every act of denial, the denial of the ( unconditional ) truth of the world, that is given in perception, is an indirect affirmation of that of one, which is above ordinary perception or is ever beyond objectivity. Indeed, the acceptance of the conditional truth of world, is not or its own sake, but has for its aim and objecti e the emphasise on the latter; that is why the Upaniṣadic texts exhort one to view the universe as 'not different' from the Brahman, its source, its stay and its ultimate end, and to contemplate upon it as such[3]. True to the acosmic view of the transcendental reality, Vācaspati cautions

1. Vide:—Bha. 649, 1 to 649, 5.
2. 479, 2 to 479, 12.
3. 160, 7-8.

us that it is in the vivarta-sense and not in that of pariṇāma, that the universe can be characterised as the effect of Brahman. For, while the lack of complete identity of character between the effect, i. e., saṁsāra, and the cause, i. e., Brahman, can be well argued against the pariṇāma view, it loses its force, when arranged against that of vivarta. The physical resemblance between the thing, superposed, and the thing superposed upon, does not constitute the indispensible pre-requisite of each and every erroneous cognition, which is at the root of every vivarta. Therefore, it cannot be maintained that in as much as there exists no physical resemblance between the infinite and changeless Brahman and the finite ever-changing universe, the latter cannot be held as the vivarta of the former, points he[1]. That the entire saṁsāra necessarily depends upon the Ātman is again the conclusion, when one considers how it, which must be of the nature of either cognition, or means of cognition or objects thereof, loses its explicable, definite character as soon as the character of cogniser, erroneosuly attributed to the Ātman during the state of conditional being, is sublated by the immediate realisation of his transcendental character[2]. The sentient and the non-sentient characters of the world also point to the sentient nature of its fundamental cause. For, while it is quite possible for the advaitin, the advocate of the doctrine of ultimate sentient cause, to explain away the non-sentient phase of the world as having its original sentience, darkly veiled and thus obscured by the tamas of avidyā, those, who maintain a non-sentient principle like 'pradhāna' as the ultimate cause of the world, would find it extremely difficult to account for the emergence of the sentient phase out of the non-sentient ultimate cause[3]. It is often argued against the advaitic conception of the world as a superposition that if the world is as good or bad as non-existent, how can it be even superposed on Brahman, because, ( and

1. 188, 7 to 189, 2.
2. Vide:—Bha. 79, 4 to 79, 7.
3. 361, 4 to 361, 7.

there is many an instance on the empirical plane to back this argument ? Super-position is possible, only when there are two separate entities to be the object and the subject thereof. But, he points out[1], the truth is that what is necessary for superposition is the existence of the subjective entity and a mere cognition (pratītiḥ) of an objective entity, which need not be inevitably existent. And this makes the phenomenon of the universal superposition quite logically possible. For, though the world, the objective entity, has no independent, i. e., extra-superpositional existence of its own, the cognition thereof, caused by the previous member in the beginningless chain of experience, is already there. He again very significantly points out that it is not the establishment of identity, but it is the repudiation of diversity, between the self and the non-self that the advaitins aim at by their efforts to deny the latter any independent validity of its own. He is fully aware of the inherent defects that the doctrine of complete identity is subject to not only this, he actually welcomes the adverse criticism of it at the hands of the Vaiśeṣikas as congenial to his own 'no-identity,—no-diversity' stand[2]. A question of identity or diversity arises only when one is asked to characterise the relation, existing between two separate entities of equal validity and truth. It therefore is not legitimate in the present problem, asserts our philosopher. For, here one of the two entities given, is entirely dependent upon the other for its very existence. It is because it is not identical with the immenent truth, though not different from it, that the world of the relative, conditional and therefore unreal validity, does not pollute its origin and stay with its own impurities in any stage of its emergence, existence or submergence[3]. The mediate knowledge of conditionality of the empirical truth, acquired through the pramāṇas like the revealed authoritative word, is, howe er, not sufficient

1. 9, 12 to 10, 3.
2. Vide:—Bha. 373, 2-3.
3. 364, 1 to 364, 6.

to enable the seeker to transcend grief; an immediate realisation of it alone is capable of it, and until and unless it flashes across the contemplative mind of the sādhaka, the saṁsāra continues to appear to him real and valid, in however diminishing degree of intensity it may be. In this respect, he sometimes equates the world that is given in perception during the state of jāgrat, with that apprehended in the dream state[1]. This similarity, however, does not induce him to regard both the worlds, presented in both the states of being as equal in validity. He is fully aware of the inherent distinction, differentiating the pair from each other. It is true, says he[2], that the objects of both empirical and hallucinatory orders are equally conditional creations of Māyā Besides this, they have much, like inexplicability and subjection to ultimate sublation, in common. Nevertheless, those belonging to the former, are undoubtedly of a higher degree of truth, because, while those classifiable under the latter, have a briefer span of ( conditional ) existence and are open to sublation during the former, the saṁsāra, which constitutes the object-matter of empirical order, has a much lengthier span of ( relative ) existence. It is open to sublation at the hands of immediate realisation of transcendental reality alone. He thus refuses to countenance the highly idealistic view, advanced by the Buddhists, advocating the doctrine of complete equality between the worlds, perceived in the jāgrat and the dream states[3]. This however, does not dissuade him from enunciating the relativity of empirical truth, and the ultimate inexplicability of the jāgrat-world,-by pondering over the analogous position of the dream-world. Within the category of empirical reality, Vācaspati includes the individual soul, conception whereof has ever been a matter of keen contention and divergence of opinion. Jīvātman, says he[4], is the Ātman, conditioned by antaḥ-karaṇa. It consists therefore of both

1. 375, 12-13.
2. 622, 2 to 622, 5.
3. Vide:—Bha. 476, 1 to 476, 10.
4. 25,6 to 25,8.

'this' and 'non-this' elements, is sentient, doer, experiencer of the fruits of his own actions. He is the object of immediate realisation and is the seat of avidyā in its both causal and effectual aspects. Characterised by ego and subject to empirical vicissitudes he owes his rise to the mutual superposition of both the self and the non-self. Kṣetrajña, again he says[1], is nothing but the adjunct of inexplicable, beginningless avidyā, as superposed on the self-manifest Brahman Thus, the Jīvahood of the individual soul is not an absolute reality. It is the Brahman, one without second, which, when ( apparently ) subject to the (apparently real) adjuncts, conjured up by the undefinable avidyā, assumes the appearance of innumerable Jīvātmans[2]. Vijñānātman, by virtue of its being fundamentally identical with the transcendental reality, is really infinite; but in the empirical state of being, during which alone the former retains its character as such, he further points out in full details[3], it assumes Jīvahood and becomes finite in character. And for this fateful phenomenon its subjection to the finite (prādeśika) antaḥ-karaṇas, conjured up ( kalpita ) by undefinable avidyā, is responsible, says he. A close study of the docrine of Jivātman, as advocated by Vācaspati in his Bhāmati, clearly betrayes a predominating emphasis that the philosopher lays on the 'avachchedaka-view' in preference to the 'pratibimba-view'. He thus never loses even the smallest opportunity to explain away the diversity between the Jīvātman and the Ātman, as due to the finitude, super-imposed on the latter, finitude, which owes its rise to the adjuncts, namely, the antaḥ-karaṇas, which are the products of avidyā[4]. He emphatically maintains that since the māyic adjuncts, known as antaḥ-karaṇas, are of conditional validity, the Jīvātmans, that owe their existence as such to them are also not a bit better than

1. 81, 5 to 7.
2. 233, 14 to 233, 17.
3. 900, 1-2.
4. Vide:—Bha. 596, 12.

relatively or conditionally true[1]. This remarkable inclination towards the famous avachchedaka view, which can be clearly detected in Vācaspati's conception of individual soul[2] is rather important in its implications. Because on one hand, it indicates that Vācaspati, following in the foot-steps of Maṇḍana Miśra whose Vedāntic out-look he has already interpreted in his Tatva-samīkṣā, before taking up the task of reading the same in the great Bhāṣya of Śaṅkara, is favourably disposed to regarding avidyā as an unanalysable independent-to-some-extent entity of a positive, though inexplicable, character. His inclination towards the limitation-theory further implies that he does not view avidyā as an unthinkable insignificant instrument ( dvāra ), through which the Brahman assumes the appearance of saṁsāra,—a view, propounded by the protagonists of Sureśvara school. To put it otherwise, the unmistakable preference for the avachchedaka-view that Vācaspati now and then betrays while developing the conception of individual soul, is a sure indication of his favourable disposition towards the conception of penultimate cause of saṁsāra, as a positive entity of a character, not so insignificant, and also independent to some extent. On the other hand, it slightly tends to accord greater degree of validity to the empirical soul than is generally done by the advocates of the reflection theory. Bhāmatī is the only first hand authority to rely upon in one's attempts to arrive at a proper appreciation of the advaitic view of Vācaspati. Therefore one should be rather cautious about attributing definite views to him ont he authority of one of his many works A closer study besides thereof, gives us a few instances, where the philosopher is clearly seen adopting the pratibimba-view with equal zeal. Thus, while explaining the mantra '-anena jīvena ātmanā anupraviśya' etc.[3], he clearly adopts the simile of a face, a mirror and a reflection of the former as received by the latter, and uses it in order to

1. 238, 4.
2. 184, 2-3.
3. 588, 5 to 588, 7.

clarify the respective position of the supreme Divinity, the receptive intelligence and the Jīvātman. On the whole, nevertheless, he has got a distinctly pronounced inclination in favour of the first among these two views, which gained much popularity in subsequent epoch of the post-Śankara development of advaitic thought. For, the pratibimba-view implicitly assumes the vivarta variety of causal relation between the bimba and the pratibimba. It is therefore hardly thought by Vācaspati as fit enough to clarify the mutual relation between the Jīvātman and the Ātman. As the former cannot be held as either a part or a transformation of the latter, says he[1], it cannot be characterised as a 'vivarta' thereof. The only relation that is possible between the two, is, neither some one based on mutual diversity, nor that has got for its basis identity-in-difference, but of complete identity[2]. He openly fights with the view that the Jīvātman be regarded as either a vikāra, or a pariṇāma, or a vivarta, of the Ātman; and the implicit alliance that the pratibiṁba-view maintains with the vivarta-vāda seems to have rendered him generally reluctant to adopt the former, so far as the problem of the essential character of Jīvātman is concerned. The avachcheda-view, on the other hand, inspite of its conceding a greater degree of validity to avidyā and to the empirical soul, offers no insurmountable difficulty. For, a super-explanation is always there in the form of conditional reality of all the adjuncts, the āvidyaic antaḥkaraṇas. How much fluid and flexible is the stand offered by Vācaspati in this connection, becomes quite clearer when one comes across a few instances[3] where both the reflection-and-limitation views are singularly treated as identical with each other. He has however no regard for those who maintain that the Jīvātman is a part ( aṁśa ) of the Brahman. He shows in full details that such a relation is not only contrary

1. Vide:—Bha. 886,2 to 886, 5.
2. 333, 2 to 333, 7.
3. 558, 1 to 7.

to the revealed Upaniṣadic texts, which sing of the latter as partless, but is also extremely illogical and even contrary to the experimental evidence on the empirical plane. He, of course, has no objection to an assumption of such a part-and-whole relation as a conditional truth[1] or a conventional method adopted for the exposition of advaitic views. In an illuminating passage[2], which-by the way, can also be pointed out as an instance of pratibimba-.iew as adopted by Vācaspati, the philosopher fully develops the doctrine of complete identity between the Jīvātman and the Ātman, and tries to repulse the the attacks from the Bhedavādins. He meets the inconsistencies inherent in his own Advaitic stand, by ultimately resorting to his favourite doctrine of the ultimate underfinability of the empirical saṁsāra in its entirety. It is not, however, the Jīvātman as actually apprehended during the empirical life that is maintained as identical with the Ātman. That would be a gross mistake. The Ji.ātman, generally mistaken by the ignorant for the self, is aptly characterised as the mithyātman and the gauṇātman, the former being the subtle and the gross bodies, and the latter all that falls within the category of 'mine'[3]. Thus, Vācaspati seems to conceive of Jīvātman as essentially transcending the two lower selves recorded above, and consisting of, if one may say so, the pure Ātman, as apparently subjected to the apparently real adjuncts, conjured up by inexplicable avidyā. The individual soul and the pure soul, says he[4], are but two aspects of one and the same noumenal reality; one is conditional and other, free from all other conditions. The mutual distinction between the individual and the universal souls is brought about by the adjuncts, māyic by nature, and since the adjuncts are only of conditional validity, the former, brought about by them, is also no better. Ever true to this fundamental view, he states that finitude as

1. Vide:—Bha. 337, 19 to 337, 19.
2. 336, 6 to 336, 9.
3. 99, 2 to 99, 6.
4. 87, 9-10.

well as the vicissitudes, consequent thereon, do not pertain to the Jīvātman; because, by virtue of his complete identity with the supreme Ātman, he is ever resplendent in his immortal, self-glory; it is the individual antaḥ-karaṇa, conjured up by Avidyā and illuminated by detached glory of the former, that forms a substratum of the attributes which the ignorant erroneously ascribe to the individual soul[1]. The divine texts, that pondering over the distinction between the individual and the universal souls, describe the latter as the stay of the former, or promise an attainment of supreme bliss on the part of the former on achieving the latter, points he[2], are not to be taken as speaking out the truth from an absolute point of view. But they should be understood by the seeker as deliberating over the diversity of the individual and the universal souls, as conjured up by avidyā and preaching the way to overcome it. The followers of other systems of thought, such as Nyāya or Sāṃkhya, who infer the diversity of the individual souls from the given fact of sets of attributes, differentiating each one from the other, are thoroughly mistaken in their assumptions, suggests, he[3]. Simply because these sets of attributes do not pertain to the Jīvātmans, but to the diversifying avidyaic adjuncts, subject to which one Ātman assumes an apprearance of many. The uncompromising stand of complete identity that Vācaspati offers over the problem of the mutual relation of the individual and universal souls becomes althemore manifest, when he characterises the Jīvātman as 'kūṭastha-nitya' and Brahma-svabhāva'; and explains away his nature, as immediately apprehended during the empirical state of being, as but superpositional and hence unreal[4]. The character of doer and experiencer, ascribed to the Jīvātman by the revealed texts, is also but empirically true. Fundamentally conditionally valid. However, he is neither a doer nor an experiencer of the effects

1. 633, 1 to 4.
2. Bha. 123, 5. to 123, 7.
3. 528, 1 to 528, 5.
4. 538, 3 to 539, 2.

of his own actions[1]. Being unconditionally identical with Ātman, like it, the Jīvātman too is infinite and omni-scient; it is, however, due to the inexplicable phenomenon of his being subjected to finite adjuncts of limited powers that he himself appears as finite and with limited knowledge, it is further pointed out[2]. Referring to the problem as to who is then subjected to the vicissitudes of saṁsāra, Vācaspati perhaps under the Sāṃkhya influence, points to the transparent and the highly receptive Intelligence, enlivened into a semblance of sentience by the reflection of the eternal glory of Jīvātman, fundamentally one with the highest truth; and maintains that it and it alone is really the experiencer of the good or the bad[3] He supports his stand by pointing out that the very fact that the character of doer and experiencer, apprahended during the empirical stage as pertaining to individual soul, falls out as sublated, the moment the ultimate truth of one's being is grasped, (a fact, vouchsafed by the authority, and upheld by the instances of Jīvan-muktas,) conclusively points to the superpositional and hence conditionally valid character thereof[4]. Entirely similar is the case with the 'pleasure' or 'pain', 'vice' or 'virtue', which are wrongly supposed as the attributes of the individual soul. Transient in existence, these cannot be either completely identical with, or though different, related to, the essential self of the individual. Really belonging to the antaḥkaraṇa, they are superposed on the self, and as such are ultimately sublated as unreal. Had they been the natural attributes of the real self of the seeker as the followers of the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools profess, it would have been impossible for him to put an absolute end to them, and thus to attain supreme peace[5], he asserts. It would be quite interesting to compare this stand as regards the nature of the individual soul that Vācaspati

1. 543, 4-5.
2. 634, 7 to 634, 9.
3. Bha. 175, 1 to 3
4. 26, 5. to 8.
5. 830, 8 to 830, 12.

offers, with the other, he maintains elsewhere in one and the same work, where he clearly characterises the individual soul as doer, experiencer and subject to various vicissitudes of saṁsāra. Of course, the mutual inconsistency between these two stands can be explained away as arising out of the difference in levels of approach. It, nevertheless, illustrates the fluid condition of the conception of individual soul in the scheme of Vācaspati. A slight climbing-down from the uncompromising stand over the problem of real nature of the individual self, on the part of our illustrious philosopher, is, moreover, marked when, accepting that bondage and liberation therefrom are possible in the case of neither pure self nor pure non-self[1], he says, that since the āvidyaic conditioning adjuncts responsible for the appearance of innumerable Jīvātmans instead of one Ātman, are themselves unreal and undefinable, the Jīvahood of the Jīvātman, brought about thereby, also turns out to be like wise[2], and draws a pointed contrast between the inexplicable Jīvātman and the definable Ātman, as the former being but empirically true and the latter, on the authority of texts, transcendentally real[3]. Such instances are however rare. His emphasis on the essential and transcendental aspect of the individual soul is far more powerful and consistent. Thus, the supreme liberation of an individual soul, maintains he[4], is but his returning to his own essential nature, consequent upon the total annihilation of the veiling avidyā, while expressly maintaining that immediate realisation of highest truth alone is ever capable of putting an absolute end to the avidyā, which is itself an object of immediate realisation[5], he draws a nicer distinction between two types of immediate realisations of ultimate reality, one— that is arrived at through a difficult process of self-meditation, and other, which, by virtue of its being identical with

1. 547, 4-5.
2. Vide:—Bha. 659. 2 to, 659, 7.
3. 124,2 to 124, 4.
4. 825, 7.
5. 826, 4 to 827, 3. 94 6-8.

Brahman, is eternal. He further states that it is the former (—which is essentially of the character of a vṛtti, exceptionally receptive and hence capable of grasping the subtle truth—) and not the latter, which can annihilate the avidyā and thus secure salvation[1]. Thus, the supreme realisation, leading to the absolute removal of avidyā is itself avidyaic, and hence classifiable within the category of empirical reality. It is not a bit illogical or improbable, maintains he[2], that a mode of Intelligence, itself avidyaic in character and empirical in validity, should annihilate avidyā, its own cause, and strip the empirical universe, including itself, of all semblance of unconditional reality and absolute validity. He tries to consolidate his position by putting forward some interesting arguments in favour of his own stand, on one hand, and pointing out likewise difficulties in the conceptions of knowledge, the instrument of final emancipation, as countenanced by other systems of thought, on the other.

It is extremety absurd and illogical to propound that the transcendental, infinite, changeless Brahman, which is a Joy itself; gets transformed into an empirical, finite, ever-changing universe, full of pain without seeking any medium,—anything of the sort of auxiliary helping factor of the highest degree of empirical validity,—maintains Vācaspati, and consequently he is always careful to point out that it is out of the former, as assisted by the inexplicable avidyā-śakti in its two-fold capacity, that the latter emerges, at the time of creation, into its apparent existence[3]. For, emphatic are the upaniṣadic texts in their declarations that it is the sentient, as endowed with the unanalysable, beginningless power of avidyā, and that alone, that constitutes the original cause of the universe[4]. Thus, as the cause of the universe, avidyā stands, in the philosophical scheme of being, as propounded by Vācaspati, second to none except the

1. 827, 6 to 828, 2.
2. 99, 12 to 19.
3. Bha. 1, 1.
4. 100, 6.

Brahman. viewed in this capacity, the avidyā of the advaitin has a few points of similarity with prakṛti of the Sāṃkhyas Both are elucidated as the original transformatory cause of the universal phenomenon; another feature that the conception of Avidyā, as advocated by Vācaspati, has in common with that of prakṛti, is its existence during the period of cosmic dissolution. (pralaya). During that span of time, he maintains[1], nothing but the inexplicable avidyā in its pure undeveloped form subsists, and it is in that avidyā that the individual antaḥkaraṇas along with their impressions of past deeds, (karma) continue to exist in a submerged, dormant form. This similarity of conception parts company, however, when Vācaspati clearly maintains that avidyā by its very nature is prone to activity of a creative, or a transformative, or a dissolvent character, and as such is never motivated by any purpose[2]. The prakṛti, on the other hand, as conceived of by the Sāṃkhyas, is emphatically maintained by them to be motivated in its activity by either of the two purposes, to wit: bhoga or apavarga. That there is no purpose, no definite motive behind the activity of avidyā, he tries to establish through drawing one's attention to the absence of purpose behind the operation of hallucinatory powers, in the empirical world of ours. This divergence of opinion as regards the aim or the purpose behind the activity of the ultimate transformatory cause of universe, that distinguishes the advaitic stand from that of the Sāṃkhyas, has deep roots in the fundamental disagreement of views over ontological problems. The prakṛti of the Sāṃkhya, however dependent it may be on the self-manifest Puruṣa for its own manifestation and motivation, is nevertheless a reality, with its own independent existence. The avidyā of the advaitin, on the other hand, though indispensable for a logical and consistent explanation of the appearance of the finite, conditional being in stead of the infinite, unconditional one, is hypothetically less than real in the ultimate sense of the word.

1. 261, 8 to 261, 10.
2. 406, 9.

To put the same otherwise, the avidyā of the advaitin enjoys a lesser degree of independent validity than the prakṛti of the Sāṁkhyas does While prakṛti of the Sāṁkhyas, says Vācaspati[1]. is, clearly definable in character ( it being of a positive and independent nature), the avidyā, by its very nature of being dependent on the Brahman for its very existence, is unanalysable and undefinable, and is, as such, expressly charcterized as 'Māyā' or the mysterious one. As it itself is ultimately undefinable, argues the advaitin, the purpose, motivating it in either of the said activities must be of a likewise character. The twofold activity of the avidyā, i. e., concealment of the fundamental reality, and projection of apparent one instead thereof, noticed by the earlier thinkers, receives an equal emphasis from Vācaspati,—so much so indeed that he often goes beyond his own stand of both of them being two different phases of one and the same principle[2], the former being at the root of the latter[3], and almost treats them as two different avidyās. He thus marks a definite advance over the Maṇḍana stand, that laid an almost exclusive emphasis on the conjuring aspect of the principle, and also on the Sureśvara view that went to the other extremity of holding the concealing aspect of the self-same principle as solely responsible for the whole mischief. Though it is the concealing avidyā (laya-lakṣaṇā avidyā) that is predominant during the period of universal dissolution, it is ably maintained, the conjuring avidyā does continue to exist even then. Of course, it does so in the form of dormant impressions, left by previous experiences of the innumerable individual souls Had the latter been totally absent during the period of cosmic dissolution, there would not have been the re-emergence of the universe after a specific time-limit[4]. Speaking of avidyā from the point of view of the individual soul, Vācaspatī designates it as 'adhyāsa' or a mutual superposition of the self and the non-self. He

1. Bha. 296, 7 to 296, 9.
2. 906, 1.
3. 25. 7.
4. Bha. 409, 3 to 49, 6.

holds this adhyāsa as entirely responsible for all the afflictions and sorrows, to which the self of the seeker, though fundamentally and essentially of the nature of immortal Bliss, appears to have been subjected, during the empirical state of Being. His definite view as regards the exact spheres of the two denotations 'avidyā' and 'adhyāsa' is not so clear. Nevertheless, instead of considering the former as the cause of the latter,—an approach, which we have witnessed in Padmapāda's philosophical outlook, he seems to look upon the two (denotations) as signifying one and the same principle, although from slightly differing angles of approach[1]. Adhyāsa, which is also spoken of as mithyājñāna in the Upaniṣadic texts[2] is, states Vācaspati, of the character of beginnigless undefinable mutual superposition of the sentient Self and the non-sentient Non-self. This Adhyāsa, he proceeds further, is of two types, known as 'Tādātmyādhyāsa' and Taddharmādhyāsa'; the first among them, consists of mutual superposition of the real self and the empirical self, while the second consists of mutual superposition of the attributes of the real and empirical selves[3]. The first, which is an object of immediate apprehension in the form of 'I', is of a more fundamental character, and is at the root of and also operates through the medium of the second. The second, the Taddharmādhyāsa, also is an object of immediate cognition; but it is so in the form of 'mine'[4]. For practical purposes however, the latter is more important and more deadly mischeivous in its workings. For, it is through the latter that the former exercises its fatal veiling influence and keeps the individual soul ever moving through the cycles of birth, growth, decay and death, painfully ignorant of his fundamental nature of Bliss[5]. Like all the adhyāsas, which are to be met with in the field of empirical life, this adhyāsa, which is at the root of all mischief, too, is, in its two-fold character, undefinable as either (entirely)

1. 19, 8 to 19, 11.
2. 9, 9.
3. 9, 3 to 9, 7.
4. Bha. 25, 2.
5. 24, 10-11.

existent or non-existent and inexplicable as either real or unreal, clarifies the philosopher[1]. The undefinability, which is the most distinguishing characteristic of adhyāsa (and, by the way, of everything else than the pure transcendental reality, Brahman) necessarily renders its validity as only apparent; for, both undefinability and unreality are synonymous with each other, asserts he[2]. Interestingly enough, he maintains elsewhere that to this mutual superposition the Jīvātman "the locus of avidyā in its two-fold aspect" owes his existence as such ( itaretarādhyāsopādānaḥ ), and to Jīvātman, in return, does the superposition its own existence. That these two should be mutually interdependent is certainly not improbable, or illogical it is pointed out; the defect, known as anyonyāśraya, does not rise here because, this chain of mutual inter-dependence is beginningless[3]. One of the most note-worthy and interesting features of the doctrine of avidyā, as developed by our illustrious philosopher in his famous commentary, is the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vāda as it came to be known later on. As in the doctrine of undefinability, in his stand over the controversial problem of locus of avidyā also, Vācaspati seems to be unquestionably impressed by his illustrious predecessor, Maṇḍana Miśra, the renowned author of Brahma-Siddhi. The influence of the latter, as imbued by the former, while commenting upon the 'Siddhi', is clearly palpable not only in his elucidations of the doctrine of undefinability, or of Jīvāśrita Avidya-vāda, but also in other matters which are however of little significance for our present purpose. We have seen, while studying the philosophical outlook of Maṇḍana, in the preceeding chapter, the clarity and the emphasis with which the view that the locus of avidyā is the Jīvātman and not the Brahman, is enunciated and defended against many a spirited attack of other sister currents of Advaitic thought. The same convincing clarity and the uncompromising emphasis

1. 25, 10.
2. 16, 2to 19,4.
3. 25, 7-8.

pervade the stand, offered by the author of Bhāmati. Thus, he definitely maintains[1] that it is the Jīvātman that forms the āśraya of the undefinable avidyā; and not the Brahman. Ever-free from it, Brahman is eternally and unconditionally pure. He explains away the statement in the Bhāṣya that tends to enunciate Brahman as (conditionally) impure, as one made in accordance with the 'abhyupagama-nyāya, i. e., made from the stand-of hypothetical acceptance. That the avidyā, the cause of the empirical existence of the Jīvātmans, should have for its locus its own creation, i. e., the Jīvātmans, is quite logically sound, though on the surface it seems to be quite otherwise, he says[2]; simply because this chain of mutual interdependence between the two, to wit—the Avidyā and the inpividual soul, is beginningless. He simply cannot see how the avidyā, along with the endless train of wrong superpositions, following in its wake, can ever subsist in the transcendental Brahman, which is ever-pure, ever-enlightened, ever full of Bliss and ever-free. It is because the Jīvātman is the locus of avidyā, and the Ātman is ever-untouched by it, that the Upanisadic texts describe the former as the 'shade' and the latter as the 'shine' (chāyātapau) asserts he[3]; except the (empirically true) inpurity, caused by the concealing and conjuring avidyā, there seems no point on which the former can be contrasted with the latter. Interestingly enough, however, a close study of the Bhāmatī furnishes one with a few instances, where the philosopher seems to have forgotten his own uncompromising stand, recorded above, and has condescended to explain the empirical universe as the transformation of the avidyā-śakti, *subsisting in the supreme Brahman*[4]. A clue to this apparent divergence from the fundamental stand is furnished by the philosopher himself, when he clearly states[5] that though eternally not subsisting in the ever-pure, ever-scient, ever-free Brahman

1. Vide:—Bha 180,17 to 81, 1
2. 165, 6 to 168, 1.
3. 172, 9-10.
4. Bha. 184, 1.
5. 336, 9-10

the avidyā is sometimes said to be subsisting therein in a secondary ( bhākta or lākshaṇika ) manner, in as much as it is the Jīvātman, a sort of reflection of Brahman, that forms the locus thereof. Another equally interesting explanation that Vācaspati offers, when faced with an indisputable elucidation of the Īśvarāśrita avidyā view in the Śānkara Bhāṣya[1], is that though the locus of avidyā is the Jīvātman and not the ever-pure Brahman, avidyā is yet sometimes characterised as 'Īśvarāsrayā' or subsisting in Brahman; because it depends on the latter for its object, and is besides capable of evolution, transformation and devolution, under the illuminating and sustaining influence of the latter's superintendence alone. Thus, it is because Brahman is its object and the efficient cause (nimitta) of its threefold activity, and not because Brahman is its locus, that the avidyā is chacterized by earlier authorities to be 'parameśvarāśrayā'[2]. In his Brahma-Tatva-Samīkṣā, an important commentary on Maṇḍana's Brahma-Siddhi, Vacaspati seems to have put forward a number of weighty argumegts, defensive as well as offensive, over the explosive problem of locus of avidyā. The work, however, has been unfortunately lost to us, nevertheless, a dependable idea of its main currents of thought can be obtained from another commentary on the 'Siddhi, which is a ailable to us. For the remarkable name of the available commentary i. e., Samīkṣā-fakkikā[3], clearly indicates a close relation to Vācaspati's Tatva—Samīkṣā, the work must have been characterised with. That it is the Jīvātman and not the Brahman that forms the locus of avidyā, can be established on a yet more convincing ground, it is pointed out in the Samīksā-fakkikā[4]. Because it is Eternally omni-scient, Brahman cannot be the locus of natural ( svābhāvika ) avidyā; and being eternally changeless, it cannot be legitimately held as the substratum of accidental ( āgantuka ) one. Had it been besides the

1. B. S. S. B, 297, 5 and 6
2. 297, 10 to 297, 13.
3. See Introduction to B. S. by Kūppuswami Sastri; Section—IV.
4. S. F. 35; 14 ta 35, 25.

locus of avidyā, the first realisation of the fundamental oneness of being, on its part, would have destroyed its avidyā in entirety, and would have consequently led to the dissolution of the entire phenomena of the universe,- an assumption, totally contradicted by the actual experience, shared by all of us including the advocates of the Īśvarāśrita-vāda themselves. As can be expected, this uncompromising stand of Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vāda naturally gives rise to an allied problem, viz., if the seat of the avidyā is not the transcendental Brahman, one, without second, but the innumerable Jīvātmans,—a question arises— does this avidyā differ with each and every individual Jīvātman, its seat; or is it one, common-to-all, like the pradhāna of the Sāṃkhyas. The brief view of his philosophical outlook, which we have taken, enables us to say with a considerable degree of certainty, that Maṇḍana, the first propounder of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-view in clear-cut terms, does not seem to have taken cognizance of, and tried to meet this problem. Vācaspati, on the other hand, takes up the problem in right earnest and emphatically maintains that the avidyā is not one, and common to all individual souls, but differs with each and every individual soul, i. e., its seat[1]. Under the guise of criticising the doctrine of Pradhāna, which is advocated by the Sāṃkhyas, he openly points out the defects, inherent in the conception of one avidyā, abiding in innumerable individual souls. Had it been one and common to all, says he, the supreme enlightenment on the part of one individual soul, leading to the total annihilation of his avidyā, would have automatically resulted in the complete cessation of avidyā as a whole and consequent supreme liberation for all. Or, to put the same in another way, the very fact that avidyā exists un-sublated-as-yet in the Jīvātmans like you and me, would logically mean that it is so in the cases of all; and the noble instances of the liberated souls or of the Jīvanmuktas, vouch-safed by unimpeachable authorities, and of unique significance for the seekers of Truth, would fall down as

1. Bha. 308, 2-3.

false. Therefore, each individual soul has got his own avidyā. It is his own personal avidyā that is annihilated by the realisation of supreme truth on the part of one particular individual soul and not the avidyās of other individuals. That is why 'A' and 'B' continue to labour under the fatal influence of their own avidyās, when 'C' has overcome it for good, states the illustrious philosopher[1]. This advance over the stand, maintained by Maṇḍana, constitutes the most important contribution of Vācaspati, and the significance of it, we shall presently consider in details. This advance is however in a somewhat preliminary stage of evolution. Nor it is strictly and uniformly adhered to by its protagonist throughout his philosophical deliberations. There are many instances[2], where his conception of avidyā, instead of remaining faithful to his unique stand of anekajīvāśrita—anekāvidyā—vāda, assumes close resemblance to the Prakṛti of the Sāṃkhyas, in being one and common to all individual souls. Indeed, the influence of the Sāṃkhya metaphysics has too deeply penetrated his philosophical outlook in general, not to betray itself in his Vedāntic view of the ultimate transformatory constituent cause of the universe[3]. To do him justice, however, Vācaspati avails himself of an early opportunity[4] to put forth an explanation of the treatment of avidyā-entity as one and not many,—the treatment, which is widely met with not only in the earlier authorities, but even in his own statements, made elsewhere. Thus he states[5] that such a treatment is adopted by earlier thinkers not because the entity concerned is one and common to all,—the draw-backs, both logical and ontological, inherent in such an assumption are too glaring to be over-looked,—but because ( and here is quite obvious the Nyāya— influence ouer the advaitin Vācaspati), all those avidyās, which differ from each and every indi-

1. Bha. 297, 4 to 297, 8.
2. 261, 8 to 261, 10.
3. 547, 4 to 547, 9.
4. 297, 9

vidual jīvātman, have the generality of 'avidyātva' or avidya-hood in common; it is with this generality in view that they though many, are treated as one. Among other characteristic features of the principle of avidyā, as enunciated by our philosopher, is his emphasis on the ultimately inexplicable or undefinable character thereof. Avidyā is known as such, it is stated in the Samīkṣā-fakkikā[1], because, essentially unanalysable by character, it cannot be designated by any other positive term, more accurate in significance and exact in application. By this term, a more emphasis is laid by the earlier authorities, not on the negative character of the principle concerned, but on its removability at the hands of its rival, viz., the Vidyā, because, only such an entity, as endowed with undefinable character and hence devoid of essential validity, can be removed forever, the Advitins maintain.

Had avidyā been 'existent', it would not have been avidyā; it would have been then either identical with Brahman or some other definable, explicable, analysable entity. The ultimate sublation to which it is subjected, denies the first of the two alternatives, while the second is turned invalid by the revealed authorities, declaring the diversity as but apparent, as well as by the experimental evidence of the Jīvan-muktas, immediately realising the Oneness of beings. Had the avidyā been, on the other hand, 'non-existent', it would not have been at the root of all mischief, as the ultimate transformatory constituent cause of saṁsāra[2]. That avidyā is essentially different from this other conceivable extremity is actually proved by perceptual evidence. But the same cannot be held as an unquestionable proof for its real existence. For, even on the plane of empirical experience of us, there can be detected many a conception which, though false and inexplicable in the ultimate analysis, appear on the surface, as quite otherwise, and therefore, enjoy undisputed validity in the day-to-day transactions of the common people. The ultimate inexpli-

1. S. F. 30.8-9.
2. S. F. 30. 19 to 30. 15

cability of each and every aspect of this universe, subjective as well as objective, which betrayes itself invariably at the end of a thorough and relentless objective analysis also conclusively points to the likewise character of its original cause, viz. the avidyā. That it is impossible to conceive of something, which is neither existent, nor non-existent nor existent-cum-non-existent, may be a sound argument in other cases, but in the present one it has no force, simply because it certainly cannot repudiate what one is forced to accept by relentless logic[1]. Indeed, undefinability of the avidyā, the cause of Saṁsāra, full of grief and pain, is not a unique, an absurd invention of the advaitins, Vācaspati seems to have stressed in his Tattva-Samīkṣā[2]. It is actually a 'sarva-tantra-siddhānta', viz., a principle, accepted by all schools of philosophical thought, including the nihilist mādhyamika Bauddha, the subjectivist Vijñāna-vādin, the realist Yogin and the atomist Naiyāyika, it is further maintained and ably pointed out as to why 'avidyā', even as conceived of by these shades of opinion, other than advaitic must ultimately be accepted as 'undefinable'. Whether this 'undefinability' of avidyā is advocated as regards its existent or non-existent character alone, or whether it is meant to pervade its whole nature, Vācaspati does not make it quite clear to us. It is true that there are certain indications in the Samīkṣā-ṭakkikā[3], which implicitly suggest that according to Vācaspati the undefinability of avidyā is restricted to its character as an existent or non-existent entity alone. However, on the strength of his suggestions in Bhāmatī, already noted, he can be reasonably held as advocating the undefinability of avidyā, in all its multi-sided character. This undefinability of avidyā, which he never loses an opportunity to dwell upon and establish on a logical basis, generally tends to make him regard 'avidyā' and 'māyā' as equivalent to each-

1. S. F. 30, 16 to 25.
2. S. F. 31, 3 to 12.
3. S. F. 30, 25-26

other, "since illogicality constitutes the very self of māyā[1]". There are however a few instances, scattered in his Bhāmatī[2], where he treats them as different, and characterises 'māyā' as "names and forms, (nāma-rūpe), conjured up in the beginning of the creation by the avidyā in its two-fold aspect". It is because of its apparently real and conditionally valid character, that the avidyā, though beginningless, can be put to an absolute end, it is argued. It is true that the course of study, reflection and meditation, leading to the immediate realisation of supreme truth, resulting in the complete salvation, is avidyāic; but that it should bring about total annihilation of its own cause, the original avidyā, through giving rise to its opposite, viz. Vidyā, is not only probable but also actually held up by many a parallel example on empirical plane it[3]. Though deep-rooted from beginningless times, Avidyā, once exposed in its true colour by Vidyā, the supreme realisation of transcendental reality is never again capable of concealing the fundamental truth of being, which is unconditional Existence, pure Sentience and immortal Bliss, from the vision of the enlightened individual soul, and ensnaring him once more by conjuring up before him a complex show of finite, unreal existences, aptly described as saṁsāra[4].

The comprehensive and objective view of the advaitic outlook, as displayed in his Bhāmatī and Tattva-Samīkṣā – which we have just taken note of above, places us now in a justifiable position to assess as certain, and evaluate the scope and the extant of Vācaspati's contribution to the evolution of some important aspects of advaitic thought. Needless to say, though not of an independent pragmatical value like that of Brahman, the doctrine of Māyā or avidyā, enjoyes a unique importance in the Advaitic metaphysics, – an importance, which is second to that of Brahman alone. Because it is of indispensible value and help

1. Bha. 337, 17.
2. Bha. 419, 10
3. S. F. 36, 12 ta 26, 15,
4. Bha, 19, 16 to 20,1,

in explaining, with a considerable amount of justification, the overwhelming difficulties the advaitin is faced with, whenever he tries to bridge the yawning gulf of irreconcilable contradiction between the reality, as stated by the unimpeachable Upaniṣadic authorities, on one hand, and the reality, that is given in actual apprehension. While, however, the aspect of transcendental reality—as revealed by the unimpeachable authorities, and the nature of empirical one—as apprehended in every-day life—both are comparatively vivid and clear, the conception of the principle, interlinking the two realities, viz., Māyā, is often subject to spirited contention and dissention among the sub-currents of thought, advaitic in fundamentals. That this is so, has been more than amply borne out by the critical view of the successive phases in the evolution of the doctrine, that we have had in the preceeding chapters. It is indeed the sharp divergence of opinion over the details in the conception of Māyā and not as regards the subtleties in those of immanent and apparent truths of being, that gave rise to many a minor school of thought, within the advaitic system of philosophy. A study of the philosophical outlooks, maintained by principal advaitic philosophers of successive epoches, which we have already taken in the preceeding chapters, bears testimony to a fact that while in the cases of the doctrines of noumenal and phenomenal realities, evolution has been mainly on the lines of clarification, synthesis and refinement, in that of the conceptiou of Māyā, it has been essentially more drastic and fundamental. All of these philosophical conceptions being closely interdependent, the drastic changes in the conception of Māyā could not but have vital repercussions on those of conditional and uneonditional truths of being, and thus induce a subtle change in the philosophical outlook as a whole. Considered from this point of view, Vācaspati's contribution to the doctrine of Māyā assumes a unique importance and significance, which even a student of the features of advaita philosophy, other than that of Māyā, cannot overlook. Because, his contribution not only directs the

evolution of the doctrine of Māyā along new channels of development, but also affects directly or indirectly the entire advaitic outlook in general. Before launching upon a critical andobjective evoluation of Vācaspati's contribution of such far-reaching effects, we would be better advised to have a brief, synthetical glance over the main features of the doctrine of Māyā as in its immediately pre-Vācāspatl stage of evolution. For, it will provide us with a fairly accurate idea of the close background, against which it would be both proper and paying to read and interpret the significance of the philosopher's contribution, and will besides enable us to ascertain, with a greater degree of certainty and objective accuracy, the degree, the scope and the extent of the debt which he owes to his great predecessors The doctrine of Māyā, which Vācaspati has inherited from the preceeding philosophers, has, like all other principal tenets of Advaita Vedānta, attained a clarity of conception and distinctness of individuality, unparalleled ever before in its centuries-old history. As is the case with all other doctrines of AV. school of thought, the doctine of Māyā also has cast away vagueness of conception, which had dominated it during the ancient Upaniṣadic age. It has got better of secondary importance in the domain of entire Indian philosophy, to which it was assigned during the whole of the post-Upaniṣadic and pre-system era. It has assimilated the significance of the sister-doctrine preached by the school of theistic Vedānta, which had played a moulding part in its evolution, during the stage of the great epic philosophy. It has outgrown the apparent resemblance with the subtle doctrine of Saṁvṛti, evolved by the extremist Śūnya-vādins of Buddhist fold, which also seems to have exercised a considerable moulding influence during its formative stage, covering the centuries immediately preceeding and succeeding the Christian era. In addition to all this it has also won a unique and influential position among the lively theoretical problems of the day, which none of the philosophers of note, to whatever shade of opinion he might belong, could ignore. The unique and valuable contributions

of the illustrious Śaṅkara, who actually came to be regarded later on as almost a divine personality, have already rescued it from the oblivious position, into which it had fallen during the vast post-Upaniṣadic era, and have firmly established it, divested of all resemblance with the heterodox doctrine of saṁvṛti, manifest in its Gauḍapāda phase, as a sound and legitimate explanation of the appearance of diversity instead of unity, of being, as vouchsafed by the divine Upaniṣadic texts. Thus firmly established, the doctrine of Māyā, as inherited by Vācaspati from his post-Śaṅkara predecessors, had already begun to enter upon a new phase of evolution. This new phase was essentially characterized by not an upward struggle to maintain one's own ground and a defensive attitude against the more powerful attacks of the rivals, as of yore, but by a consolidation of position and refinement of metaphysical subtleties. Highly flexible by nature, however, the doctrine of Māyā, unlike other advaitic doctrines, offered, even in this phase of evolution, enough scope for daring flights of philosophical speculation. Besides this, its former vague character and fluid conception granted the post-Śaṅkara advaitic philosophers, a considerable amount of freedom of speculation, which was almost denied to them in the field of transcendental reality, which was made crystal-clear by the preceeding unviolable authorities. Moreover, the main target, at which all other rival systems of thought centred their fire of adverse criticism during the intense philosophical activity that characterised the century immediately succeeding the great Śaṅkara, was not so much the advaitic conception of the noumenal reality; for, it had at its back unimpeachable authority of the scriptures; nor it was that of empirical reality, which was, broadly speaking, on the lines, well established by the protagonists of the Sāṃkhya philosophy, long before, but it was the uniqne and highly controversial and subtle doctrine of Māyā, which was indispensibly vital to the advaitic stand on the ontological problems. This furious exchange of fire could not but leave its own impression on this flexible conception. The frequent

clashes with the rival modes of thought, though repeated with equal force, did much in way of casting a moulding, though indirect, influence over the doctrine of Māyā. Moreover, the post-Śaṅkara advaitins, keenly attentive to the metaphysical subtleties of their own school, were more interested in the elaboration of the doctrine of Māyā in all its aspects as the ultimate transformatory constituent cause of the world of diversity and the root cause of all mischief than their predecessors. The latter including Śaṅkara himself, were more pragmatic, and hence were primarily concerned with the subtle elucidation of the transcenderital reality, the immediate realisation whereof constituted the 'summum bonum'. All these factors,—to be concise,—combined together to give a powerful impetus to the evolution of the doctrine, unparalleled everbefore. The various lines, along which this evolution gradually shaped itself during the post-Śaṅkara times, are clearly suggested in his *Saṁkṣepa Śārīraka* by Sarvajañātman, where he has taken note of no less than seven sub-currents of thought, based on divergence of opinion over the exact implications of the doctrine of Māyā. Most important of these we have already noticed and appreciated in the preceeding chapter. Main points of contention, over which these sub-currents of advaitic thought crossed swords were not so much the fundamental characteristics of Māyā, as its finer metaphysical subtleties. Thus, neither the school of Padmapāda, nor that of Sureśvara, nor the tradition of Maṇḍana—ever challanged that the Māyā was non-sentient and heterogeneous in character, or that it was dependent on the self-manifest Brahman, or that it was but of conditional validity. In spite of this agreement in general, there was a sharp disagreement as regards the particulars. As we have studied in details the views expressed by each one of these schools, and have also compared and contrasted them with each other, in the preceeding chapters, we do not consider it necessary to dwell upon once more the points of divergence of opinion that reigned between them. When we, with to much of conception of ideological situation that formed the

back-ground of his contribution, turn our attention to the views, expressed by Vācaspati Miśra, who succeeded these great advaitins of post-Śaṅkara period, shortly afterwards, and when we try to read in them a remarkable note of ideological alliance with any one of these three schools of thought, his palpable inclination towards the Maṇḍana school presents itself as an undeniable faet. His selection of *Brahma-Siddhi*, which constitues the original source of the Maṇḍana tradition, as a work authoritative enough to merit a lucid and illuminative exposition in the form of a commentary at his hands, speaks a good deal in favour of such an assumption. Indeed, this aptitude for Maṇḍana's views, reamarkable in Vācaspati's out-look, is not confined to the domain of advaita philosophy alone. It is also palpable in the field of Mīmāṅsā. Because it was through the exposition of Maṇḍana's great work in the Mīmāṅsā i.e. *Vidhi-viveka*, in the form of a commentary, known as Nyāya-Kaṇikā, that Vācaspati Miśra thought it beginning to contribute to that great system of Vedic philosophy. Though his Brahma-Tatva-Samīkṣā has been unfortunately lost to us, a general conception of its doctrine-contents (which can be gathered from the available Samīkṣā-Fakkikā, as observed before) and its comparison with his out look, as displayed in his *Bhāmatī*, make it abundantly clear as to how much the illustrious author of Bhāmatī owes to his equally great predecessor for his unique approach towards the problem of Māyā. It cannot, of course, be denied that there are a few points even in the advaitic set-up, where the views, maintained by these two great philosophers, necessarily come into a collision. Even in the Bhāmati, there are a few instances, where Vācaspati obviously tries to criticise or improve upon the views held by his favourite predecessor (165), but these cases, being very few, cannot but substantiate by way of exception the general statement, made above. These exceptions, besides, have no direct or indirect bearing upon the problem of Māyā. Complete concordance between the two as regards this flexible principle, has been testified to by an overwhelming number of instances. The

comprehensive study of Maḍṇana's philosophical outlook, taken up in the preceeding chapter, more than amply justifies one in regarding one as the first and the foremost propounder of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā view in clear-cut terms. Closely succeeding the great Śaṅkara, who, as we have already seen in exhaustive details, had left his stand over the problem of locus of avidyā, somewhat fluid and uncertain, Maṇḍana was one of those earliest post-Śaṅkara advaitins, who tried to improve upon this uncertain aspect of the doctrine and thus originated sub-currents of thought, which assumed distinctive individuality of their own, later on. Thus, the Jīvāśrita-avidyā view, which came to be generally ascribed to Vācaspati, had an undeniably earlier beginning. Comparative obscurity, into which the Brahma-Siddhi of Maṇḍana Miśra seems to have fallen in later periods, as well as the clarity of conception and emphasis of tone with which the view is propounded in the works of Vācaspati—both these factors seem to have been responsible for this attribution inaccurate from historical point of view. Likewise phenomena are not quite rare in the field of ancient Indian philosophy. Thus, the characteristic tendencies, which are discernible, though vaguely, even in the philosophical outlook, maintained by Padmapāda himself, later came to be attributed to his commentator, the author of Vivaraṇa. In our present case, however, there seems to be an undeniable justification for even such an inaccurate attribution. Because, the fashion in which Maṇḍana has dealt with this aspect of the doctrine of Māyā has been more elementary and brief than elaborate and thoroughly exhaustive. It is Vācaspati, who, closely succeeding this great advaitin, elucidated in a fuller form the subtle details of this view, in his great commentaries on Brahma-Siddhi and Śāṅkara-Bhāṣya. Nor can one resolutely preclude the possibility of his having contributed to the furtherence of this unique Jīvāśrita-avidyā stand through his other works on advaita philosophy, such as *Vedānta-Tattva-Kaumudī* or *Brahma-Tattva-samhitoddīpinī*,—the works which are known to us only in names. Whatever may be the cause of the comparative obscurity of the earliest originator of this subtle

aspect of the doctrine, which came to cast, later on, considerable influence over the problems, ontological as well as epistemological and thus provided a unique opportunity for a bold display of powers of speculation and flights imagination of first order, the unchallengeable significance of Vācaspati's contribution towards it, becomes convincingly manifest as soon as one compares and contrasts the view as propounded by him with that, as expressed by Maṇḍana. When faced with the problem of the locus of avidyā, Maṇḍana resolutely points to the individual soul, and openly criticizes the Brahmāśrita-avidyā view, which seems to have been gradually developing side by side. He does not enter into further details of his stand, nor does he trouble himself much to face and solve the unavoidable problems, raised by it. The utmost that he does this way is seen in his half-hearted and vague attempt to explain away the defect of mutual interdependence (annyonnyāśraya-doṣa), inherent in his stand. With Vācaspati, however, the case is different. Though a greater bulk of his original contribution to the view, conveyed by his Brahma-Tatva-Samīkṣā and Vedānta-Tattva-Kaumudī, has been lost to us, even what has been allowed to come down to us is enough to show the real value thereof. Thoroughly acquainted with the reasons and the considerations, that impelled his predecessor to accept his uncompromising stand over the problem of locus of avidyā, Vācaspati states the fundamentals of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā view in more clear-cut and emphatic terms; he exposes the logical inconsistencies and the mutual contradictions, inherent in the stand of Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādins; he repulses the adverse criticism in a more thoroughly manner; he besides tries to meet and solve the allied problems, raised by his own stand in a manner, at once bold and original. While his predecessor points to the ultimate undefinability of avidyā as the only explanation of mutually inter-dependent position of avidyā and its locus, the individual soul, Vācaspati, more logical and rational in his attitude, lays emphasis on the beginninglessness of the two entities interdependently involved, and thus refutes the charge of his rivals. Maṇḍana again does not make it clear

to us whether in conceiving of avidyā as subsisting in the indivual soul, he is thinking of one avidyā, common to all individual selves, or he is talking of innumerable avidyās, differing with each and every one of its seats. This problem of oneness or manyness of avidyā, subsisting in the individual selves, is fraught with far-reaching fundamental consequences, than is apparent on the surface. References in the Saṁkṣepa-Śārīraka of Sarvajñātman clearly tell us that in the post-Śaṅkara era this problem had given birth to a yet subtler schism within the fold of Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādins themselves. Vācaspati, preceeding Sarvajñātman by a few decades, can be legitimately held as the originator of one of these subtler currents of opinion. For, he is the first advaitin, known to us, who, improving upon the original stand of Maṇḍana, states in clear-cut terms that the avidyā, the locus of which cannot be logically maintained to be Brahman, is not one, common to all individual souls, its seats; but is many, differing with each and every one of them. Had avidyā been one, subsisting in many individual selves—we have already seen him arguing—, its ultimate sublation, consequent upon the ultimate realisation of transcendental reality, on the part of one individual soul, would have automatically led to its likewise sublation on the part of all other individual souls; and thus the supreme enlightenment on the part of one Jīvātaman would have resulted in the liberation of all. The indisputable fact that other individual souls go on, as of yore, rotating through the beginningless cycle of birth, growth, decay and death,—conjured up by fatal avidyā, painfully unaware of the essential truth of being, while one of them overcomes avidyā by means of constant contemplation of Self, leading ultimately to the immediate realisation thereof, and transcends grief and pain, is extremely significant, argues the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vādin. Because, it conclusively establishes that avidyā, in its both original and evolved forms, necessarily differs with each and everyone of its seats, i.e., the individual souls. The references in the Saṁkṣepa Śārīraka are there to show that the protagonists of the aneka-jīva-āśrita-eka-avidyā view did not meet this

challenge lying down. They reasonably pointed out that though avidyā is one and common to all individual souls, it is not at all necessary, as the imaginative aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vādins profess that its sublation at the hands of one individual enlightened soul must result in the universal enlightenment and liberation. They besides tried to illustrate their point through the simile of a generality like cowness (gotva jāti), which, though one and common to all individual cows, is not destroyed, even when a particular individual cow, one of its seats, is annihilated, but continues to subsist in the rest as of yore. Even a minute study of his works, available to us, does not show an equally convincing reply that Vācaspati, in furtherence of his favourite aneka-jīva-āśrita-aneka-avidyā view, would like to return to this stand. Nor does he seem to have gone much further than stating the essential fundamentals of his unique view. He does not tell us, for instance, whether accroding to him the universe, that is given in perception as 'this', is one and common to all individual souls, the beholders thereof, or is different with each and every one of them. The uncompromising and emphatic aptitude that he shows for the bold view that every individual soul has got his own (particular to his own self alone) avidyā, which can be put to an absolute end through his vidyā alone, should logically lead him to accept that as the avidyā, the ultimate transformatory constituent cause of the universe, differs with each and every individual soul, the universe, it being its direct creation, necessarily turns out to be particular to each one of them. The result would be innumerable universes, arising out of innumerable avidyās of innumerable individual souls,—a position, which can be reasonably characterized as representing the first stage of the famous Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-Vāda of the later epoch. So far as his out-look, displayed in his available works, authorizes us to say,—Vācaspati Miśra does not seem to have given much consideration to this perfectly logical development of his unique aneka-jīva-āśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda, which is itself a development of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vāda, as propounded by Maṇḍana Miśra. Needless to say then, that he does not trouble himself

with a task of giving an adequate explanation of the difficulties, inherent in the logical development of his bold view. For example, if the universe, as apprehended by 'A', is the creation of his own avidyā, it must be mutually different from the universe, apprehended by 'B', which, in its turn, also must be his own exclusively; now if in this way, each particular individual soul has got his own particular universe, and if there is nothing, inter-lacing all these innumerable particular universes, how is one to account for the clear notion of 'commonness', which undeniably pervades the apprehensions of these particular universes? Such a notion cannot be simply ignored into silence. For, so strong it has been that they (i.e., the innumerable particular universes) are actually held by all, except the ultra-speculative aneka-jīvāśrita-anekāvidyā-vādins, aptly characterised as Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādins, to be one and common to all individual preceptors thereof. Vācaspati Miśra does not furnish us with any solution to the said difficulty, arising out of his unique stand. Nor is it true from historical point of view that the highly speculative deliberations recorded above owe their rise, exclusively to the later epoch of post-Śaṅkara evolution of the doctrine. For, while no student of advaitic philosophy would dispute the fact that it was in the latter phase that they grew prominent and crystal-clear, their earlier appearance is obviously pointed out by the references in the Saṁkṣepa-Śārīraka. For, there in an attempt to meet the difficulty, recorded above, a sort of common back-ground to the innumerable particular universes is conceived of in the form of a common-to-all-individual-souls-universe, arising out of, existing in and submerging into the avidyā, better known as Māyā in this context, of God. Sarvajñātman, the author of Saṁkṣepa Śārīraka, whose philosophical activity lay in the immediately post-Vācaspati period (900 A. D.), seems, on the grounds of the said references, to be fully aware of the logical developments of the aneka-jīva-āśrita-aneka-avidyā view, which appears in Vācaspati's outlook, for the first time in its centuries-old evolution. It is, therefore, remarkable that the Bhāmati does not reflect, even in a general or a vague way,

these logical developments of its own doctrine, which were not entirely unknown or un-evolved during the period of its own appearance. Perhaps, the peculiar conditions to which a commentator is naturally a subject, might have debarred our illustrious philosopher from pursuing his own favourite doctrine to its conceivable logical conclusions. This task, he might have thought more proper to undertake in his independent works. The possibility of his having discussed the problem in all of its metaphysical niceties and logical conclusions somewhere else, most probably in some of his independent works on advaitic philosophy, such as Vedānta-Tattva-Kaumudī, now lost to us, cannot be summarily dismissed as without any basis whatsoever. The matter-of-fact way in which the fundamentals of the aneka-jīva-āśrita-aneka-avidyā view are stated in the Bhāmati without much discussion and argumentation, either offensive or defensive, lends support to the possibility, recorded above. A want of strict and faithful adherence to the full implications of his own unique view on the problem of locus of avidyā, on the part of Vācaspati, becomes once more manifest, when he explains away the treatment of avidyā—entity as one,—a treatment which is widely met with in both the earlier authorities and his own statements, made elsewhere,—as due to the generality of 'avidyātva', subsisting in different individual avidyās. Had he been an uncompromising and staunch adherent to the further development of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā view, made possible by him,—the development, characterisable as aneka-jīva-āśrita-aneka-avidyā-view, in all its subtleties, he would not have returned such an answer, which strongly smells of the Nyāya influence. He would have, instead, maintained that his treatment of avidyā entity as 'one' is perfectly legitimate, in as much as it is the personal avidyā of a given individual soul that he is deliberating over; the innumerable avidyās of the innumerable individual souls, other than this given individual soul, are for him, the creations of his own avidyā, and not some thing, independent of it. In this way, he, starting from the Jīvāśrita-avidyā view, maintained by his illustrious predecessor, Maṇḍana, developing it in the

aneka-jīva-āśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda, would have evolved something like the startling eka-jīva-āśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda and would have arrived at the conclusions, strikingly similar to those, reached at by the protagonists of a totally different eka-cid-āśrita-eka-ajñāna-view, so ably defended in the Saṁkṣepa Śārīraka by Sarvajñātman, and appreciated by us in the preceeding chapter. In this way, to put the same idea otherwise, he would have transcended the lower phase of the Vivarta-vāda, known as Bahu-Jīva-vāda. Instead of returning this radically new and boldly original answer, which would have been more harmonious with his original stand, he offers an explanation, which, although plausible to some extent, fails to tackle the problem in its entirety, and only betrays the influence of the Nyāya metaphysics, Vācaspati has been never able to cast off completely. Perhaps, taking into consideration the incomplete and partial character of the view of his advaitic outlook that has been allowed to us, it would not be fair and proper to pass any conclusive opinion on Vācaspati's errors, if I may say so, of omission and commission in such a controversial and subtle matter. Moreover, flourishing at the dawn of the subtle Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine (so much so indeed that he actually came to be regarded as the originator later on), Vācaspati Miśra cannot be fairly and reasonably expected to display all the subtle niceties of the doctrine, he is in favour of. For, such metaphysical subtleties and complexities naturally require a long and uninterrupted flow of give and take on doctrinal level a constant and sharp criticism from rival schools of thought, as an impetus and are hence but gradually and slowly evolved into distinct individuality of their own. To us, acquainted that we are with all the facets, that the doctrine acquired later on these subtler developments, appear to be nothing but the logical, matter-of-course, conclusions of the doctrine, irresistible and obvious to every one. But they might have been, and quite naturally too, rather indistinct and vague in that earlier stage of evolution. Whatever might have been the case, one is fairly justified in evaluating Vācaspati's contribution to this important face of the doctrine of Māyā, on the

ground of the relevant statements, made in his works available to us,—making reasonable concessions for the possibility of his having contributed in a richer variety and fuller details, through his works, which, who knows, Time has taken away from us for ever, or has concealed from our view, only for the time being. The comprehensive study of his advaitic outlook in general, the critical view of the doctrine of avidyā, as enunciated by him, and its comparison with the contemporaneous currents of thought which we have gone through, place us in a justifiable position to assess the exact significance of his contribution. And we can say, with a reasonable degree of certainty and justification, that though he cannot be acclaimed as the very originator of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine,—one of the most important facets of the doctrine of Māyā in the post-Śaṅkara epoch (the earliest traces of it (i.e., the doctrine) going back as early as Maṇḍana's activity), Vācaspati can be legitimately and justifiably held as the most important contributor towards it, who did exert a great moulding influence over the earlier phases in the evolution thereof. It is he, who, through developing the original Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine into the subtler form of aneka-jīva-āśrita-aneka-avidyā-doctrine, as opposed to the aneka-jīva-āśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda, laid sound foundations of the highly speculative and daring, eka-jīvāśrita-eka-Brahma-viṣayaka-eka-avidyā-vāda of the later epoch. The view, enunciated by Vācaspati, while it is one of the most important aspects in the doctrine of Māyā (or avidyā), as evolved in the post-Śaṅkara period, —it is not a bit less than of fundamental value to the doctrine of Dṣṛṭi-Sṛṣṭi. To put it in other words, while the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā view, as originating from Vācaspati, represents the intermediary stage in the evolution of the original aneka-jīvāśrita-avidyā-vāda into the highly speculative eka-jīva-vāda of later epoch, it reflects the first and the fundamental stage in the evolution of the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda. For, without this initiation of Vācaspati Miśra, the later subtler phases of this unique doctrine would have been hardly possible. Indeed, the latter embody the ultimate logical conclusions,

reached at through a chain of thought, initiated by the former. In what exact way, this unique stand of aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā doctrine, and this opening phase of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda, as enunciated by the celebrated author of Bhāmati, gradually developed into the unique achievements of speculative genius, we shall see in details in the next chapter. Let it suffice to say here that though Luck has allowed us only a partial view of his comprehensive advaitic outlook, conveyed through a number of original works, even what has been available, is enough to convince us of his encyclopaedic range of his erudite learning, that knows no boundaries or limits and his deep, first-hand acquaintance with every school of Indian philosophical thought, orthodox or heterodox, ritualistic or speculative, elementary or highly refined. With his intuitional inclination towards the advaitic approach to the riddle of existence, as the only unimpeachable solution to the 'secret of the gods', surpassing all other similar approaches in legitimacy and refinement of conception, he displays an almost singular grasp over the advaitic metaphysics in all its subtleties, which is at once illuminative and creative. Far-reaching in effects indeed is the unique significance of his contribution to the doctrine of Māyā, which, developing the views inherited from his illustrious predecessors, set into motion a chain of thought, that ultimately resulted in the singular doctrine of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi, of unique speculative value.

(A) The true significance of Vācaspati's contribution to the advaitic thought in general and the doctrine of Māyā in particular, becomes all the more manifest, when we study it in the light of the far-reaching influence it cast over the latter epoch of the evolution of post-Śaṅkara advaitic thought. For, a full-fledged evaluation of a particular contribution of a particular philosopher necessarily requires, not only its complete assessment from an objective point of view, or its appreciation against the background of the similar current of thought, preceeding it but also a sympathetic study of the influence that the contribution was destined to exercise in future. This generalization holds good, not only in the case of our illustrious philoso-

pher, Paṇḍit Vācaspati Miśra, but also in those of almost all renowned advaitins, who appeared on the scene immediately after the great Śaṅkara, and initiated, as we have already seen in details, different modes of philosophical speculation, essentially advaitic in character and faithful to the teachings of the great master, yet individually marked with certain tendencies, at once particular. A study of the influence that these schools of thought of the earlier epoch came to exercise upon the latter one, is both interesting and illuminating. Out of the traditions, initiated by Sureśvara, Maṇḍana and Padmapāda, it was the last one, that came to exercise a dominating, all-round influence over the evolution of later advaitic thought. Less revolutionary and speculative than the second one, the third draw towards itself, (thanks to the more orthodox and the more easily comprehensible explanation of the riddle of existence, that it offered) a greater number of advaitic thinkers of the later period. The sole distinguishing characteristic was, not originality of conception or boldness of speculation which one comes across in the works of these advaitic philosophers belonging to the latter epoch of post-Śaṅkara evolution, but it was the elaborate systematisation of the metaphysical subtleties, often ignored by the earlier thinkers, as bereft of any pragmatical value. Feeling themselves as called upon to furnish a satisfactory explanation of many a problem, mostly concerned with the two lower phases of being, viz., empirical and apparent,—an explanation without which no system of philosophical thought can claim maturity,—the advaitins of this later epoch found the philosophical outlook, as enunciated by Padmapāda much more helpful than the other two. In their attempts towards perfection, they did however derive valuable help from the remaining two too. For, one can never deny the debt that even the staunch followers of the Vivarṇa school (—the Padmapāda tradition, as it came to be known later on) owe to the traditions, initiated by Sureśvara and Maṇḍana. So powerful indeed has been the inter-change of influences between these currents of thought, that in spite of the fact of his being an originator

of a separate school, Sureśvara actually came to be regarded later on as one of the earliest exponents of the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda, the dominating characteristic of the Padmapāda school. More distinct has been the career of the Maṇḍana tradition during the later epoch of evolution. While the current of thought, initiated by Padmapāda, gradually gained in width of influence, while the school, originated by Sureśvara and so admirably developed upon by Sarvajñātman, kept on its less striking existence, often confused with that of the former, the mode of philosophical quest, initiated by Maṇḍana and fully elaborated by Vācaspati, continued, throughout the later epoch, to enjoy a thoroughly independent existence of its own. Though less popular than the Padmapāda tradition, remarkable indeed its later career is for its daring flight of speculation, boldness of conception and irrefutability of logical reasoning. Consequentially, the advaitic philosophical thought of the latter epoch can be safely sub-divided under two heads,—one, where the Padmapāda tradition enjoys a moulding influence, and the other, where the outlook, as preached by Maṇḍana, and firmly established by Vācaspati, has the final say. For, the Sureśvara tradition can be safely dismissed as devoid of an independent career of its own; its uncompromising stand over the problem of locus of avidyā came to be incorporated by the protagonists of Padmapāda tradition, and its 'eka-jīva doctrine' was ultimately assimilated by the followers of Maṇḍana school. By no means, however, is bridgable the gulf, that kept the latter two, clearly separated throughout their chequered history. The first is known to be Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin, and the second, Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādin. For, while they maintain almost identical views as regards the problem of ultimate reality of being, these schools of thought cross swords, entirely over the problems, pertaining to the two lower strata of being. Developing under the direct influence of 'Brahma-āśrita-avidyā-view', as held by Padmapāda and Sureśvara, and the 'Jīvāśrita-avidyā-view' as enunciated by Maṇḍana and Vācaspati, these two schools conceive of the ultimate material cause of the universe, in their independent

ways and gradually arrive at the explanations of the riddle of existence, essentially advaitic, yet characteristically dissimilar to each other, as regards the problems of empirical and phenomenal validity. A detailed view of the salient features of these two schools of Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda and Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda will not only afford us a close acquaintance with this latter epoch of post-Śaṅkara advaitic thought which presents this unique mode of Indian philosophical quest in its richly developed form, but it will also enable us to have a detailed knowledge of the different phases of the subtle Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi doctrine itself, as well as the points of view whereon it differs from its sister doctrine of Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi, and will place us thus in an unimpeachable position to assess and evaluate the objective truth in its attribution to Vācaspati. In other words, it will help us to understand to the full the extent of the influence that our illustrious philosopher has been able to cast over the evolution of later advaitic thought.

(B) Even a cur-sory view of the philosophical outlook, as maintained by the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins, is enough to convince one of the fully developed character of the doctrine of Māyā, as it came to be conceived of in this final phase of evolution of advaitic thought. Instead of a vague, and fluid character that had dominated it during the pre-Saṅkara and even Śāṅkara times, this unique tenet of advaitic philosophy assumes, at the hands of the Sṛṣṭ-Dṛṣṭi-vādins mostly, a clear-cut and solid appearance which not only satisfactorily accounts for the appearance of diversity of being, in stead of oneness thereof as vouchsafed by the revealed texts, but also furnishes one with plausible explanations of many a problem, concerned with the empirical order of being. Often conceived of in an abstract way (i.e., neither with reference to the individual soul, as is the case when it is thought of as 'Avidyā'; nor with relation to the transcendental reality, in which circumstance it is mostly characterised as 'Māyā') and in an independent capacity as the ultimate transformatory material cause of the universal phenomenon, this principle gradually comes to be characterised as Ajñāna, more and more, with a view to lay special emphasis on its character

standing in dire contrast with the ultimate reality, the Jñāna. Ajñāna, argues the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-Vādin, is definitely positive in character. Its existence as such has been convincingly proved, not only by unimpeachable authority, or by the secondary pramāṇas like Arthāpatti or Inference, but also by Perception in the form of 'I am ignorant' or 'I do not know' or 'I slept well and did not know any thing'.[1] Had there been no ajñāna, as positive and distinct from 'Mithyājñāna' or non-apprehension', or the impressions left thereby, the individual soul would have automatically realised his fundamental indentity with the transcendental Brahman, in the state of deep sleep. The very fact that he does not do so, conclusively proves that even during that state, where there are no preventives like mithyājñāna or adhyāsa or non-apprehension or impressions left by any one of them, preventives, which are active during the states of jāgrat and svapna—there is some positive principle, which, through its veiling influence, prevents the Jīvātman from waking up to the noumenal reality even when he is nearest to it.[2] Endowed with a beginningless existence, which remains unsublated till the immediate realisation of unconditional truth of being, ajñāna it is, which, operating against the back-ground of the pure Cit, conjures up the show of saṁsāra, and sustains it in all the phases of transformation. More fundamental and deep-rooted, it is the cause of 'mithyājñāna' and 'adhyāsa', —the factors, which are directly responsible for the bondage of the individual soul. The ajñāna, the existence whereof has been thus universally testified to by the common apprehensional evidence during the state of deep sleep, does not however,—the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin makes it clear,—veil the ultimate reality, even during that state, in its totality. For, being dependent on the sustaining influence thereof, it simply cannot afford to do so, and continue to exist at the same time. It is in its aspects of pure bliss and unpolluted sentience that the Cit remains veiled by the ajñāna, during the

1. PPV. page-12, line-16 to 13, 17.
2. PPV. 42 ; 9 to 42, 25.

state of suṣupti.[1] This concealing and conjuring principle is characterized as ajñāna, not because it constitutes the negation of jñāna, that is indentical with ultimate reality. Being of a positive character, it is much more than that. But it is termed as such because it forms the direct opposite thereof and is open to ultimate sublation at its own hands.[2] Not only in the state of suṣupti, but also of jāgrat and svapna, this beginningless, and ultimately undefinable, ajñāna does continue to veil the self-manifest Cit. The only point of difference between the three states is that, while in the latter two the concealment is played upon by the distractions such as ego-notions and the like, in the former, it remains undisturbed and hence self-prominent.[3] Undefinability of this ajñāna, which has the ever-pure Ātman both for its locus and object, one has to accept by hypothesis, remarks the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin. Had it been definable, the effects thereof, viz., the superpositions, of two-wise character of knowledge and objects of knowledge, would not have been undefinable. Inexplicability of the effect is an uncontradictable pointer to the likewise character of the cause.[4] Invariable concomitance between the ajñāna and the mutual superimposition of the self and the non-self also suggests that the former is the constituent cause of the latter. The said superposition otherwise cannot be explained as either owing its rise to the mere absence of transcendental knowledge, or to some extraneous defects, not pertaining to the Ātman, the locus of superposition, or devoid of any constituent cause at all.[5] The common experience, such as 'I am ignorant' (Ahaṁ ajñaḥ) clearly points out that it is the Self, which is of the character of unconditional existence, pure sentience and limitless bliss, that forms the substratum of this ajñāna; itself owing its own existence to ajñāna, the antaḥkaraṇa cannot be legitimately held to be the seat

1. PPV. 16, 3 to 16, 18.
2. PPV. 16, 19-20.
3. VPS. 23, 20.
4. VPS. 18, 4 to 18-9.
5. VPS. 14, 26 to 46, 13.

thereof. Indeed, the very fact that during the state of suṣupti, when the antaḥkaraṇa remains dissolved into its own constituent cause, asserts the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin, the ajñāna continues to conceal the pure Cit, suggests conclusively that the former is not the locus of ajñāna. Same argument can also be put forward against the view held by some advaitins, viz., it is neither the sentient self nor the non-sentient internal organ, but it is the former, as conditioned by the latter, that forms the locus of ajñāna. For, during the suṣupti, the absence of the latter would have resulted in the absence of the former, as characterized by the latter; it would have, in its turn, led to the absence of ajñāna, for want of a locus. And thus, concludes the Brahmāśrita-ajñāna-vādin, there being no obstruction thereunto, the eternal and self-manifest glory of the pure Self would have shone forth in the state of deep sleep, and none, on going to bed, would have woken up next morning, enchained to the vicissitudes of the empirical life as of yore.[1] Hence, it is the pure Cit that forms the locus and the object of the impure ajñāna. It is out of the former that the latter derives its sustainance and conjures up a diversity of Jīvātman and Brahman. Though thus it has got relations with both the individual soul, its creation, and the transcendental Brahman, its stay, it is only in the case of the former, and not in that of the latter, that the ajñāna displays its fatal workings.[2] However improbable it may seem on the surface, proceeds the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin, there is nothing illogical in the ajñāna having one and the same Cit, both for its lcous and object. For, of a nature different from 'action' and primarily consisting of concealment ajñāna, he points out does not require mutual distinction between its locus and its object. Like the tamas, it conceals its own stay (āśraya). Nor does the character of the pure Cit, which is eternal sentience, preclude the possibility of its being the locus of ajñāna; because, ajñāna itself dependent on the eternal glow of the Brahman for its own manifestation, is in no way in direct contrast with the stay

1. PPV. 45, 7 to 46, 13.
2. PPV. 45, 1 to 45, 6.

thereof, except in a specific way[1]. And, this much is conclusively proved by the unique phenomenon of deep sleep, where the undisturbed ajñāna is clearly apprehended as being actually manifested by the pure Cit. The very fact, besides, that there is a wide range of difference of opinion even among the thinkers, as regards the self, which is of the character of immediate sentience, and which, hence, should be always above contention, clearly proves that in spite of its being omniscient and ever-pure, it does lie concealed by some veiling principle.[2] This fact of concealment of the self-manifest Ātman by the ajñāna, which cannot be defined as either total annihilation of its eternal glow or hindrance thereof in its act of manifestation, is really speaking undefinable; and, being undeniable at the same time, it only points to the inexplicable character of its cause.[3] It does not however mean, the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin hastens to make it clear, that this āśrayāśrayi-bhāva, binding the pure Ātman with the impure ajñāna, does in any way or degree impair the essential nature of the former, as sung of in the revealed texts. For, how much ever a high degree of validity and ultimacy the latter may enjoy in comparison with the different phases of the universe, conjured thereby, it essentially loses all its semblance of reality, and stands out as but a creation of imagination, when compared with the noumenal truth of being. And, verily, however intimate may be the relation between the real and the unreal, by its very character of being unreal, it can never affect any real change in the real.[4] Hence, what is meant by the characterisation of ajñāna as positive is that it is 'not negative'. For, it cannot be classified as entirely true or entirely false, completely positive or completely negative, is really speaking inexplicable.[5] Its undefinability, which ultimately turns out to be the only conclusion, in whatever aspect it is tried to be defined, whether

1. PPV. 43, 6 to 43, 18.
2. PPV. 15, 7 to 15, 19.
3. VPS. 20, 21 to 21, 9.
4. VPS. 23, 21 to 23.
5. VPS. 95, 21 to 95, 25.

as one or many, or as endowed with parts or as partless, is clearly proved by its destructibility through knowledge. Had it been a definable entity or non-entity, it would not have been removable through mere knowledge of the ground thereof.[1] This undefinable, undeniable, beginningless ajñāna, the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin proceeds further to explain, conceals the self and conjures up the non-self. Its concealing operation, in other words, is only in regard with the self. For, while its concealment of the self remains undeniable, there is no justification whatsoever, for considering it as exercising its concealing influence over the non-self world too. The fact that the non-self world is not cognized in an uninterrupted continuity can be satisfactorily accounted for even without considering it as concealed away by ajñāna. The non-self world is not always known, because the means, leading to the cognition thereof, are not always operative. It is not always unknown, because the non-apprehension thereof is sometimes removed away by the factors leading to its cognition. But it is sometimes known and other times unknown, and is such an ever object to the śākṣi caitanya (uktaṁ hi sarvaṁ vastu jñātatayā ajñātatayā vā sākṣi—caitanyasya viṣaya eveti).[2] Thus, according to the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin, the ajñāna has two-fold activity. In relation to the self, it both conceals its fundamental nature and conjures up the superimpositions of subjectivistic character; while as regards the non-self, it does not conceal it but only gives birth to various appearances therein[3]. There is no justification for assuming that each and every object, falling within the category of the non-self, has got a separate ajñāna, positive in nature, for its own constituent cause; for, it can be well accounted for as having arisen out of one ajñāna, beginningless and positive, which has for its locus and objects the immanent Brahman, one without second.[4] Thus, all the objects of empirical and phenomenal validity have for their ultimate trans-

1. I.S. 63, 3 to 63, 9.
2. VPS. 18, 10 to 19, 26.
3. VPS. 23 , 23 to 23, 25.
4. PPV. 14, 16 to 14 , 19.

formatory constituent cause one ajñāna, known in this context as prakṛti. Whenever a realisation of the ground of a hallucinatory object, such as conch-silver, takes place, it only sublates the object, as conjured up tby the ajñāna, and leaves the latter, the material cause of the former, uncontradicted. Had the latter too, like the former, been subject to sublation, a realisation of the ground of hallucinatory object would have resulted in the total contradiction of the ajñāna as a whole, and would have thus led to the ultimate liberation.[1] It is the immediate realisation of the transcendental reality that can put an absolute end to the complex show of the universe as well as its constituent cause, the ajñāna, as a whole. A realisation of the ground of a phenomenal object is not capable of such a task. For, it is concerned with the reality, empirical and not transcendental. The fact that the ajñāna is beginningless cannot be argued against its destructibility. Because, what determines destructibility or non-destruct bility of a thing, is not its beginninglessness or otherwise, but the presence or the absence of the factors leading to its destruction. This is a fact, which no thinker, to whatever shade of opinion he may belong, can deny, without being himself caught into glaring inconsistencies in his own doctrinal set-up[2]. A further indication as to what extent the process of synthesis was pursued by the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin as regards the doctrine of Māyā, as the principle responsible for the appearance of diversity in stead of oneness of being, is further furnished when he openly identifies the relatively later conception of ajñāna with that of avidyā, which is of hoary Upaniṣadic antiquity. Avidyā, which is conceived of as nonsentient power, and as the ultimate transformatory material cause of the universe, it is emphatically maintained[3], is the self-same principle talked of by the moderners as 'ajñāna' in order to lay emphasis on its removability through 'jñāna'[4].

1. VPS. 20, 7 to 20, 16.
2. PPV. 15, 27 to 96, 11.
3. I.S. 69, 15.
4. I.S. 69, 7.

However illogical may it seem to be on the surface that the ever-pure second-less Ātman should have got this doṣa of avidyā in himself, it is a fact, vouchsafed by both the authoritative texts and the immediate experience, common to all[1]. Fully conscious of the glaring inconsistencies in his own stand that a non-sentient, impure, ever-changing, avidyā should have for its locus the sentient, blameless, changeless, Ātman, the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin often resorts to dialectical reasoning and misses no opportunity to show that his is the only possible explanation of the riddle. The existence of avidyā, he points out, is a fact none can ever dispute without betraying himself into a flat contradiction of one of the most obvious truths. Next, it cannot be independent; because it is non-sentient and hence inevitably depends upon the illuminating Cit for its manifestation. And there is no reason why an entity, which invariably depends upon another for its very manifestation, should be granted an independent existence, which might continue to be, even when not manifested by the other. Further, it can not be dependent on the non-self; because it constitutes the ultimate cause of all the non-self, phenomena; how can it be then dependent upon its own effects? Had it been, besides, dependent on the non-self, how would it have been ever object of the illuminating glow of the Self? The undeniable fact that it is actually apprehended during all the states of empirical being, is enough to convince an impartial thinker that avidyā is neither sentient by itself, nor independent in its existence, nor dependent on the non-self, but is, in some inexplicable way, related to the Self[2]. As however it is undefinable by character and hence but apparently real, the undeniable fact of its having for its locus and object the transcendental Brahman, proved above, is also but an empirical, and not absolute, truth. Being as such, it does not in any way or degree, effect a real impurity in the pure self[3]. The

1. VPS. 45, 16 to 45, 26.
2. I.S. 207, 8 to 208, 16.
3. PPV. 87, 8-9.

Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin openly welcomes all the adverse criticism of his doctrine not only as wide of mark but also as strengthening his own stand[1]. For, all such criticism points, directly or indirectly, to the fundamental undefinability and thence the conditional validity of the avidyā-entity, maintains he. Being such an uncompromising advocate of the "Brahmāśrita-avidyā view", which had made its first appearance in the outlooks, maintained by Padmapāda and Sureśvara, the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin, no wonder, severely criticizes the ''Jīvāśrita-avidyā view", developing side by side. The stand of the Jīvāśrita-advidyā-vādin is, it is interestingly pointed out,[2] mutually inconsistent. Without being its stay (āśraya), the Brahman cannot be the object (viṣaya) of avidyā. For, there being only one Cit, and not many, the differentiation of the locus and the object of avidyā, both of whom must necessarily be sentient, as advocated by the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādin, is extremely ill-founded. Indeed, the very existence of the avidyā is endangered, as soon as it is sought to be seated in anything else than the transcendental Brahman. It is the latter alone (and not the Jīvātman, who after all falls within the category of empirical reality) that gives the former any semblance of reality. Consequentially, the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādin can never satisfactorily explain as to how the flash of the supreme realisation in the form of 'I am Brahman' (a realisation, which necessarily implies that Brahman is both subject and object) can ever put the fatal avidyā to an absolute end. For, his dogmatic refusal to admit Brahman as the locus of avidyā irresistably leads to its denial as the object thereof. If the pure Cit, ever-sentient by character, is not to be the locus of avidyā what then is to be its seat, asks the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin[3]. To propound that it is the individual soul that provides the āśraya, is to accept that avidyā has its own self for its stay; for the former is a product, conjured up by the latter. And, such

1. VPS. 50, 6 to 50, 21.
2. I.S. 324, 13 to 325, 8.
3. I.S. 328. 20 to 329, 6.

a position would not only be open to the defects, such as ātmāśrya and anyonyāśraya, but it will also jeopardize the arrangement of bondage and emancipation. Because, the avidyā having its own self for its stay (an assumption, which, by the way, is totally inconsistent with advaitism), it would remain enchained by itself. The Self would remain ever unaffected, not only unconditionally but also conditionally, by either avidyā or its working, simply because it is neither its stay nor its object. And thus it would have nothing to do either with bondage or with liberation therefrom. The bondage of avidyā by avidyā, argued above, is also inadmissible, the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādin further points out. Because, bondage is essentially a relative term; it, therefore, necessarily assumes a liberation. The former is as impossible without the latter, as the latter without the former. Now, liberation, well, it is impossible in the non-sentient avidyā, whether in its original or developed forms. For, how can the means of liberation, viz., the immediate realisation of the pure Cit as the essential reality of one's being, can ever dawn in the non-sentient avidyā or its product? Liberation being thus impossible in the avidyā, bondage also irresistably turns out to be so. That both of them are impossible in the Brahman according to the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vāda, we have already seen. May we ask then, asks the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādin, the advocates of the subtle Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vāda, that if bondage and liberation, which form the most vital crux of the philosophical quest, are not possible either in the Self, or in the Non-Self, or in the Self as conditioned by the Non-Self (—the third category, which constitutes the explanation that the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-Vādin would like to give, being impossible in the scheme, as maintained by the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādin), where they then are so? Hence, it is the self-manifest Brahman that forms the locus of avidyā during the empirical state of being, and attains supreme liberation from it through the realisation of its own essential reality. Had the individual soul, itself a product of avidyā, and hence of a non-sentient character, been the seat of avidyā, how would have the supreme enlightenment in the form of

'I am Brahman', which is possible in the sentient alone, arisen in the non-sentient Jīvātman and put an absolute end to the avidyā? For, a total annihilation of avidyā by vidyā is possible only when both have got a common substratum. This condition, however, the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādin cannot logically satisfy. For, as he fancies it impossible to accept the Brahman as the locus of avidyā, he must necessarily accept it equally impossible to view the non-sentient Jīvātman as the seat of vidyā[1]. Interestingly, however, the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādin has no satisfactory reply,—an impartial observer must admit, to return to the most sound argument, put against him by the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādin, namely 'if the locus of the avidyā is not the individual soul, innumerable in number, but Brahman, one without second, attainment of supreme enlightenment on the part of one individual seeker after truth, would naturally result in the total annihilation of ajñāna, and would automatically lead to the complete liberation for all. There being one ajñāna, operating against the ground of, and having for its stay, one Brahman, as soon as it is destroyed through jñāna, the whole show of universe, conjured up thereby, would vanish away of its own accord'. Confronted by this 'āpatti', aptly described as 'eka-muktau sarva-mukti-prasaṅga', many thinkers within the fold of the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vāda, try to get out of it by developing the principle of avidyā, in such a way as to account for the continuance of saṁsāra, even after the liberation of one individual seeker. The more radical among the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādins, however, presumably under the guiding influence of Sarvajñātman, rise, in their attempts to solve the said āpatti, to such a dizzy height, that they almost assume, in spite of their fundamentally different stand over the problem of locus of avidyā, a close resemblance to the stand of the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādins, who are definitely in favour of Jīvāśrita-avidyā-view. All of the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādins,—perhaps themselves feeling dissatisfied with their own explanations of the said problem,—try to meet their opponents by extending the same

1. I.S. 329, 7 to 329, 13.

doṣa to their stand. They subject the fundamentals of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā view to a close scrutiny, and spare no dialectical skill in showing in exhaustive details that the protagonists of that view also do not hold any satisfactory explanation to the said 'prasaṅga'.[1] Some even go so far as to maintain[2] that the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādins are at a disadvantage, additional to this, which is common to both. Because, if it is the individual soul, itself a product of avidyā, and hence of conditional validity that forms the locus of his avidyā, the total annihilation of the latter, consequent upon the supreme enlightenment, would inevitably result into the instantaneous dissolution of the former. For, how can the effect ever stay without its cause? Nor can this be welcomed by the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādins as an 'iṣṭāpatti'. For, such an instantaneous dissolution of the mithyā-ātman, immediately succeeding the removal of the ajñāna, would render the Vedāntic conception of Jīvan-mukta, a living example of the unchallengable validity of the Upaniṣadic principles, entirely impossible. It would thus irresistibly dismiss any opportunity for the enlightened individual soul to continue, even for a limited span of time, to exist on the empirical plane of being and to impart invaluable guidance to other erring souls, craving for eternal peace. This, what is technically called as 'guru-śiṣya-paramparā-bhaṅga', is an additional disadvantage, that the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādin incurs through his dogmatic refusal to accept the avidyā as one undefinable śakti, subsisting in the Brahman, one without second. The self-same entity, responsible for the saṁsāra as its ultimate transformatory constituent cause, is, according to a majority of the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins, called as Māyā, when an emphasis is sought to be placed upon its indescribable, unanalysable character[3]. It is true that there is a slight variance in the denotations of the terms Māyā and avidyā. The former implies an employer thereof, who being master of it, is not subject to its influence; while the avidyā is generally understood to exercise its deluding

1. I.S. 331, 12 to 332, 23.
2. I.S. 330, 18 to 331, 11.
3. I.S. 69, 7 to 69, 9.

influence over its own āśraya—the latter having no mastery over it.[1] Such a fine distinction, however, need not deter one from identifying avidyā or ajñāna with Māyā; for, not only (i.e., the said distinction) is unimportant, but it is also without sound basis. With their distinguishing attributes, widely interchangeable, both avidyā and Māyā are fundamentally indentical with each other, in as much as both are undefinable and unanalysable in character, both veil the fundamental reality and conjure against the back-ground thereof an apparent one[2]. Some of the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins however do not view the Māyā, the avidyā and the prakṛti as completely indentical with each other, but consider that the prakṛti is the ultimate material cause of the universe, heterogeneous in character and sustained by the enlivening influence of the pure Cit; the same with the pure 'sattva', predominent, is called as Māyā; and with the impure one, as avidyā[3]. Such refined arrangement however reflects the culminating phase of the last epoch of the evolution of the doctrine; and not being so widely held, need not contradict the general observation, made above, viz., a majority of the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins conceives of the avidyā and the Māyā as indentical with each other. Māyā, it is thus said[4], can be characterized as non-sentient and deluding, when viewed ordinarily; as indescribable and unanalysable, when scrutinized philosophically; and as essenceless, and as good as non-existent (tuccha) when compared with the noumenal reality. It is powerless and dependent; for it requires the sustaining influence of the pure Cit. But it is also powerful and independent, because it not only conjures up a passing show of finite being, but also makes the infinite one actually appear as affected thereby. Sometimes, presumably under the influence of the theistic currents of thought, quite powerful at that time, Māyā is enunciated[5] as the "śakti'

1. SDS. 447, 6 to 448, 6.
2. VPS. 37, 1 to 38, 6.
3. PD. 1, 15 to 16.
4. PD. Chapter—6, verse 130 to 134.
5. PD. 2,47 to 55.

of the Brahman, which cannot be defined as either different from or identical with that ultimate reality, the conditional validity of which however is testified to by the experience of the effects, conjured up thereby. It does not envelope the transcendental reality in its totality, but in one-fourth part thereof (tripād asyāmṛtaṁ divi) alone. Thus, the phenomenon of the universe, along with its ultimate transformatory material cause, i.e., Māyā, has its apparent existence in only one of the parts ( —this treatment of the noumenal reality as endowed with parts, is an empirical method of approach, it must not be forgotten) of the immanent Brahman. The non-sentience, that characterizes each and every of the universe, clearly signifies, says the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin[1], that the ultimate source thereof, i.e., Māyā, is nothing less than the material cause of the latter. There is, however, a subtle divergence of opinion even among the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins as regards the amount of emphasis, that should be laid upon the causal character of it. Some among them maintain that Māyā, the source of non-sentience and transformation, and Brahman, the origin of existence and sentience, —both are equally responsible for the creation of the universe as the combined cause of it. Others want the former of the pair, mainly responsible for the phenomena, and try to explain away the causal character, attributed to the latter by the texts, as being 'lākṣaṇika'. The changeless Brahman, though never engulfed in the act of creation, is held as the ultimate cause of the saṁsāra, because, they assert, it is only by virtue of the enlivening sustainance imparted thereunto, by Brahman that the Māyā is ever able to evolve out into the form of universe.

The self-same mysterious entity, which is termed as 'mithyājñāna' also, when an attention is sought to be drawn to its inexplicable character,[2] is the constituent cause of the mutual superposition of the self on the non-self, technically called as adhyāsa, which is directly responsible for the bondage of the individual soul,

1. VPS. 207, 10 to 14.
2. PPV. 11, 13 to 15.

asserts the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin. It is neither the pure Self nor the non-sentient internal organ, but the mithyājñāna, which is at the root of this fundamental mutual superposition; and this has been conclusively established by the invariable concomitance that characterizes the two[1]. Being thus but a creation of ajñāna, the mutual superposition, which is responsible for the conditional existence of both the mithyātman and the gauṇātman, and which thus is at the root of all the activities of the Jīvātman, vanishes away as soon as the constituent cause thereof, i.e., the mithyājñāna, is put to an absolute end through the rise of its opposite, the Vidyā[2]. Though thus the general trend of the philosophical outlook held by the protagonists of Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-Vāda, favours the adhyāsa as the creation, differing with every individual soul, of the one, common-to-all, ajñāna, operating against the sustaining back-ground of Brahman, one without second, a stress is often laid on the essential identity between the two. Avidyā, thus, it is said[3], is characterized as adhyāsa, when it becomes for an individual soul an object of immediate cognition.

The fully developed character of the principle of Māyā, as advocated by the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins as the ultimate transformatory material cause of the universe, could not but have cast a moulding influence over their entire philosophical scheme, dealing with the problems, related to the three realms of reality. The thickening process, that had set in the evolution of the doctrine of Māyā as early as the age of Padmapād, reached to culminating point in the latter epoch of the post-Śaṅkara evolution and at last succeeded in giving the protagonists of the Brahmāśrita-eka-avidyā view a solid, definite and clear-cut principle to fall back upon, whenever challenged to account for the diversity of being, as given in perception. No wonder that the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins gave it an overwhelming importance in their philosophical deliberations. Thus, it could not but have its own repercussions on the allied problems. Universal regard for the doctrine

1. PPV 11, 15 to 12, 11.
2. PPV 96, 16 and 17.
3. PPV 256, 21-22.

of immanent reality, as handed down from the Upaniṣadic ages, which all of the advaitins instinctively cherished, did not allow their unique conception of Māyā to effect any revolutionery changes in the conception of ultimate truth. Nor did they dispute the basic tenet of advaitism that the infinite diversity of being, though apparent for the time being, does not in any way really affect the infinite unity thereof, as vouchsafed by the texts[1], or contend that total removal of the former, automatically leading to the recognition of the latter, constitutes the 'summum bonum'. An equal emphasis was, however, laid on the cosmic view of the transcendental reality, though of course with a word of caution that it in itself does not constitute the end. Thus, it is maintained that origin of universe is the Brahman in conjunction with the Māyā, and characterized with the cosmic attributes, such as omni-science etc. and not the transcendental one, which, being 'Kūṭastha', can be cognized through the negation of the attributes, super-posed thereon.[2] While the conception of noumenal reality thus displays little innovation, the philosophical interpretations that the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins put forward to explain the two lower orders of being with their allied problems, clearly display the moulding influence of their unique doctrine of Māyā, to which they have been subject. The thickening process, which developed the once-vague-and-fluid principle of Māyā into a definite doctrine of a clear-cut solidarity, and assigned to it the most predominent position within the realm of empirical reality as its ultimate transformatory material cause, also lifted up the conception of empirical reality out of vagueness and fluidity, that had characterized it in the earlier epoches. The arrangement of the multifarious features of the empirical order of being is modelled, speaking on broad terms, after the lines, adopted by the Sāṅkhyas. Indeed, the sole distinguishing characteristic of the philosophical outlook, enunciated by the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins, which fundamentally differentiates it

1. SLS. 10, 15 to 11, 10.
2. SLS. 10, 15 to 11, 10.

from the one, adopted by the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādins is that the former, though essentially advaitic, is far more impressed by the Sāṁkhya metaphysics than is the latter. Their fundamental stand that the entire universe is the evolution of one Māyā, operating against the back-ground of one Cit, led the former gradually into a close similarity with the Sāṃkhyas, who also tried to account for the universe in a some-what similar fashion. With the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādins, however, the matter was, as we shall see in due course, different. The foremost effect of their unique conception of Māyā, as advocated by the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins, can be seen in their doctrine of individual soul. The Jīvātman, it is thus said,[1] the doer of the good and the bad actions, and the experiencer of the fruits thereof, consists of name and form (nāmarupātmaka), and thus being but a 'kārya' falls within the category of empirical reality. The conditional validity of the individual soul has been honoured by the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādins also. Because, it is afterall an inviolable fundamental tenet of advaitic philosophy. But while the former lays a special emphasis on the māyic aspect of this complex principle, refuses to give him any special significance and tries to explain the riddle of universe on broader lines of one infinite Māyā, operating against the ground of one Cit, the latter, more subjectivistic in his approach, places an overwhelming stress on the transcendental aspect of the individual self, and tries to account for the diversity of being from the stand-point of the individual, to whom it is given in perception. This we shall make clearer in its due place. Let it suffice here to say that the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vāda, wherefrom the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin never flinches, compels him to conceive of the Jīvātman in a manner, strikingly similar to one, pursued by Sāṃkhya. The Jīvātman, thus it is often said, is but the reflection of the Brahman, received by the transparent internal organ.[2] Consequentially, the reflection theory, which reduces the thing, equated to the reflection, to a status of mere appearance, finds more favour with the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins, than does the

1. VPS. 201 15 and 16.
2. VP. page 395.

limitation-theory. Interesting arguments are sometimes put forward[1] to show how it is the reflection theory that can account for the possible relation between the Jīvātman and the Ātman, most satisfactorily, and how the limitation theory, though apparently plausible, is without a convincing basis. 'What the elders wanted to clarify through the adoption of the latter theory', it is emphatically maintained[2], 'was the imperturbable character of the transcendental Brahman, which, in spite of its being involved in the complex phenomenon of a Jīvātman, ever remains unaffected in essentiality'. For, however conditional in validity might be the Jīvātman as such, he, even the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin admits[3], has got an innermost core of transcendental truth, which remains uncontradicted, even when all of the rest false attributes, superposed thereon, dissolve away under the impact of the highest knowledge. The entire universe, set amidst which the Jīvātman acts and reacts, is the direct creation of Māyā, asserts the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin, which operating against the sustaining ground of Brahman, evolves itself out in a cosmic process. The phenomenon of the universe, to put it in other words, owes its existence to the transcendental reality, immanent in every phase of it, and not to its apprehension by the Jīvātman, as some extremists within the fold of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda would have it. This emphasis on the extra-apprehensional (Dṛṣṭi-atirikta-Sṛṣṭi) as well as the independent—of—apprehension (Dṛṣṭi-Nirapekṣa-Sṛṣṭi) existence of the world, gradually led the later philosophers to propound a view of the universe, which was drastically different from one, enunciated by the predecessors. The world, as given in perception of the innumerable individual souls, is one and common; because, it came to be maintained, it is 'Īśa-sṛṣṭa', i.e. created by one and common to-all Māyā, operating against the background of Brahman, one without second.[4]

1. VPS. 68,17 to 69,5.
2. VPS. 69,2 and 3.
3. VPS. 67, 8 to 12.
4. PD. chapter-4, verse—1 to 4,13.

The Jīvātmans, however, labouring under the fatal influence of mithyājñāna and various adhyāsas, created by the fundamental Māyā attach deceptive attitudes of attachment, detachment and hatred, and thus give rise to another creation, known as 'Jīvasṛṣṭa', because it owes its rise and existence to the deep-rooted avidyaic imperfections of the Jīvātmans. The latter has for its basis the former[1]. Out of these two aspects of the world, it is the latter, and it alone, that keeps the individual soul enchained,[2] state these later Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins. Therefore, when the supreme knowledge dawns upon an individual soul and awakens him to his fundamental indentity with Brahman, it puts an absolute end, through the annihilation of the mithyājñāna and the various adhyāsas, under which the seeker had laboured from times, beginningless, to the Jīva-sṛṣṭi saṁsāra, and not the Īśa-sṛṣṭa too. The former, however, cannot bind the enlightened soul. For, it is only through the latter that the former can exert its influence. The transcendental knowledge, moreover, besides annihilating the latter, also enlightens the seeker as to the conditional validity of the former, and robs it thus of its power of mischief-making[3]. For, it is not the mere apprehension, but it is the wrong belief in the unconditional truth, of the diversity of being, that keeps one, enchained to the vicissitudes of saṁsāra.[4] This startlingly new philosophical interpretation of the empirical world clearly shows to what extent the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins, in their logical elaboration of the original Brahmāśrita-avidyā stand, tended to give the empirical universe a degree of truth, absolutely extra-apprehensional, independent of apprehension, and un-interrupted even by the supreme awakening on the part of one of its cognizers. True, it was adopted with all its implications in the concluding phases of the later epoch itself; by no means, however, are scarce the indications even in

1. PD. 4,18 to 4, 23.
2. PD. 4, 32 and 35,
3. PD. 4, 38 to 4, 40.
4. PD. 4, 42,

the earlier phases, that implicitly bespeak a growing tendency ultimately leading towards it. True, in the opening phases of the latter epoch an effort is always made to remain faithful to the uncompromising monism of earlier thinkers through exposing the super-positional character of every thing, non-self [1] or through equating the world, as perceived in the state of Jāgrat, with that, as experienced in that of dream, point of similarity lying in the essenceless-in-itself nature, characterizing both.[2] Nor, can it be denied that the earlier Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins, sometimes put forward brilliant arguments in favour of the conditional truth of empirical reality.[3] No opportunity is ever lost to point out as to how the degree of truth and extra-apprehensional existence that the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins tend to give to the empirical order of being, placing it thus higher than the phenomenal one, does not necessarily come into conflict with the 'mithyātva' thereof, as preached by the earlier thinkers.[4] A growing inclination towards giving the empirical world a degree of validity, that would be practically almost at par with the same, accorded by the realist Sāṃkhyas, can be nevertheless detected even in the beginning phases of the later poch. The undefinability of the empirical universe, which is what the earliers meant whenever they characterized the saṁsāra as 'mithyā',[5] is legitimate—it thus came to be argued as early as the flourish of Prakāśātman[6]—*only with reference to the noumenal reality*. The world, to put it in other words, cannot be explained as sat as the transcendental Brahman can be. Inexplicability of the universe is thus a relative proposition. There is nothing, therefore, illogical in maintaining the empirical world as definitely explicable, when weighed against the phenomenal one. And, even when the

5. VPS. 24, 9 to 19.
1. PPS. 18, 9 to 12.
2. PPV. 207, 10 to 208, 3.
3. SLS. 72, 13 to 17.
4. SLS. 72, 15 and 16.
5. PPV. 31, 1 to 3.

supreme realisation of the unconditional truth dawns upon the seeker, it does not—it is maintained by the same illustrious authority,[1]—sublate the empirical universe in its totality, but only regards the notion of the ultimate and unconditional validity, attached thereunto so far, as being baseless. It is due to the ultimate sublation of this type, and not to the fact of its being perceivable through vṛtti-jñānas, arising out of the mutual super-position of the self and the non-self, that the saṁsāra is held as mithyā or inexplicable.[2] No wonder then that the line of demarkation, differentiating the realm of empirical from the phenomenal one, which was indistinct and fluid during the pre-Śaṅkara and even the Śāṅkara periods and which gradually assumed a clearer appearance as the evolution proceeded along the lines of the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vāda, can be detected as being on ascendency even in the opening phases of the philosophy of Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins. Thus, the post-Śaṅkara career of this line of demarkation, as maintained within the circles of Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda, presents a direct contrast with the same, as handled in the sphere of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda. For, in the latter case, it gradually grew thinner as the advaitic thought evolved along the channels of Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vāda, and ultimately disappeared in the culminating phase thereof. And of this contrast, we have the glimmerings even in the earliest phases of the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda. Thus, Prakāśātman emphatically maintains[3] that whatever may be the character of empirical world, when compared with the noumenal reality it is definitely of greater substance than the hallucinatory one, and being as such, it is erroneous to equate it with the other. Though the appearance of diversity of being has one point in common with the appearance of phenomenal objects, namely, ultimate sublation, it does enjoy, he often emphasizes[4], a vastly greater span of seemingly uncondi-

1. PPV. 206, 17 and 18,
2. PPV. 89, 24.
3. PPV. 207, 5 to 7.
4. PPV. 243, 16 to 20.

tional existence. It is the basis of all our empirical activities, and requires the transcendental knowledge for its sublation; and being as such, it is undebatably of higher truth and essence than a phenomenal appearance.

This brief study of salient features of the philosophical outlook, as maintained by the protagonists of Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda, which commanded a most dominating position during all the phases of the later epoch, unmistakably impresses one with a remarkable fact. It shows one clearly how the gradual evolution of the advaitic thought, proceeding along the lines of the Brahmāśrita-Brahmaviṣayaka-eka-avidyā-vāda, enunciated by Padmapāda and Sureśvara, culminated, presumably under the moulding influence of the Sāṃkhya metaphysics, in a world-view, practically akin to one, as enunciated by the latter. It is true that even the interpretation of the empirical world, as countenanced by the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins is fundamentally advaitic. For them too, the a-cosmic, all-exclusive view of the fundamental reality alone is the ultimate truth[1]. They too, are the uncompromising adherents of Vivarta-vāda, to which they do not fail to resort, whenever called upon to explain the diversity of being, that is given in perception, in harmony with the oneness thereof, preached in the texts. In spite of all this, the fact remains that so far as their world-view itself is concerned, it is undeniably conceived of after the fashion of Sāṃkhya metaphysics. Deny the plurality of the Puruṣas, as a needless assumption. Add one more characteristic of eternal bliss to the eternal character of the Puruṣa. Refuse to accept the ultimate transformatory material cause of the universe, the Prakṛti, as an unconditional, independent reality. Stress the ultimately undefinable character of it and its transformations; and, lo, one has advaita Vedānta, as developed by the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins. The remarkable fact that, barring a few distinctions, mainly of an ontological character full of far-reaching consequences, no doubt; but of little practical

1. I.S. 325, 19 to 21.

repercussions, at the same time, there is no not-worthy difference in the outlooks, held up by the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins on one hand and the protagonists of Sāṃkhya school on the other, is traditionally supported by a popular dictum—'vyavahāre tu Sāṃkhya-nayaḥ'. The case however is entirely different with the advaitic outlook, developed by the followers of the Jivāśrita-avidyā view, enunciated by Maṇḍana and Vācaspati. Starting in their philosophical quest after the ultimate truth from quite different grounds, adopting quite different sets of argument and speculation in their attempts, more revolutionery and daring in spirit, the followers of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā view, developed out of the fundamental tenets of advaitism, a highly refined, dizzily speculative and absolutely original, outlook on life, which is a unique achievement of the Indian philosophical genius. The following detailed view of the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda will make this clearer.

(C) Just as the origin of the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda can be reasonably traced back to the Brahmāśrita-avidyā view, enunciated by Padmapāda and Sureśvara, that of the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda also can be detected in the Jīvāśrita-avidyā view, held by Maṇḍana and Vācaspati. Both the Vādas are but the logical developments of the respective views. Contemporary in origin, development and flourish, these two Vādas,—under which it is quite possible to classify almost all advaitic thought of the later epoch,—came to a head-long clash, now and then exchanged subtle influences, and moulded each other's development to a considerable extent. Fundamentally based on the principle that the locus of impure avidyā, the ultimate transformatory constituent cause of the universe, can be only the impure individual soul, the current of the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda essentially begins with a severe criticism of the Brahmāśrita-avidyā view, which forms the basis of the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-Vāda. The apprehensional evidences put forward by the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins to prove the factual existence of the avidyā entity, not only establish what they are adopted for, but also show the real locus of the entity,

proved by them. Each and every one of the experiences, such as 'Ahaṁ ajñaḥ' or 'Sukham ahaṁ asvāpsvaṁ, na kincidavediṣaṁ', clearly points out that it is the individual soul, indicated (however erroneously may it be) by the notion 'Ahaṁ', that forms the real locus of ajñāna, asserts the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādin.[1] The view that the transcendental Brahman forms both the locus and the object of avidyā, is flatly denied by the texts, which sing of the noumenal reality as 'Ever-pure', Ever-free from all blemishes and defects' and 'Uncontaminated' ? Had it been the āśraya of the impure and non-sentient avidyā, how the ultimate truth could have been unimpeachably preached to be 'niravadyaṁ nirañjanaṁ', it is asked[2]. The immediate realisation of the transcendental reality, which has been unanimously accepted by all the advaitins as the only means of the absolute annihilation of avidyā, with all its accessories, is (and this has been accepted by all, including the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādins themselves),[3] but a particular, highly refined, exceptionally transparent, mode of antaḥ-karaṇa. Being as such, it has for its locus, not the transcendental Brahman, which is changeless and is hence above being the seat of any type of vṛtti-jñāna, but the individual soul. Now, if there is to be any opposition between the ajñāna and the tattva-jñāna (and that it actually is, has been vouchsafed by the texts and the examples of the liberated souls) both must have common substratum. And the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādin can never hope to comply with this condition. For, according to him, the Brahman, and not the Jīvātman, is the locus of ajñāna; while of the Tattva-jñāna (of the nature, said above) it is the latter that forms the substratum.[4] Extremely illogical indeed is an explanation offered by some of the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādins,[5] who try to meet this

1. I.S. 325, 19 to 21.
2. VSM. 523, 3.
3. PPV. 89, 22 and 23.
4. VSM. 250, 10 to 251, 2.
5. PPV. 65, 2 to 5 ; and 66, 6.

incongruity by propounding that while the locus of ajñāna is the transcendental Brahman, it is the individual soul that forms the seat of. mithyā-jñāna, and hence the total removal thereof through the rise of the tattva-jñāna is quite possible. For, there is no justification for differentiating mithyājñāna from ajñāna, as this stand implicitly does. There is yet another disadvantage in this position, which is conveniently ignored by the advocates of it. If it is the removal of mithyājñāna, a sort of effect of the ajñāna on the part of the individual soul alone, and not the total annihilation of the fundamental cause of it, too, what the supreme realisation effects,[1] the latter being always there, there would be no certainty that the individual soul, even if enlightened and liberated, will never fall again into the snares set far and wide by ajñāna, and will, thus never attain complete emancipation. Hence, argues the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādin, in order to secure unconditional endlessness of liberation, vouchsafed by the texts, such as 'Na sa punar āvartate' and the like, mithyājñāna and its fundamental cause ajñāna, both must be put to an absolute end through the rise of their opposite, Vidyā. And this is possible only when all the three have a common substratum, such as the individual soul. Had the transcendental Brahman been the locus of avidyā, the complete annihilation of the latter, even if it were possible, would have inevitably resulted in the total destruction of the former, it is sometimes argued.[2] For, it is simply inconceivable as to how an entity, seated in the other, can be put to an absolute end, without ever introducing any change in the seat thereof. Immutability of the noumenal reality, on the other hand, is an unviolable truth, revealed by the scriptures. The most effectively used weapon of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādin in his criticism of the Brahmāśrita-avidyā view, that forms the basis of later Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda, is however the 'eka-mukti-sarva-mukti-prasaṅga', said afore. The conclusive proof in favour of the stand that the avidyaiç individual soul is the only

1. PPV. 257, 8.
2. I. S. 327, 13 to 14.

seat of avidyā,—the transcendental Brahman eternally standing aloof,—is furnished by the fact, says he,[1] that even the supreme enlightenment on the part of one individual soul, necessarily resulting in the unconditional sublation of the ajñāna with all its acessories, does not automatically result in the universal liberation. Had the Brahman been subjected to the vicissitudes of saṁsāra, through being the seat of avidyā, it would have destroyed its own avidyā long ago, at the time of the liberation of first individual seeker after truth, and thus, there would have been no saṁsāra existent now. Hence, concludes the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādin, the predecessor of the protagonists of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda, the ultimate transformatory constituent cause of the universe, known as Māyā, avidyā, ajñāna, mithyājñāna or Prakṛti, which is undefinable yet undeniable, and which has for its object the transcendental Brahman, one without second, has the innumerable individual souls, its own creations, for its seat.[2] The mutual interdependence of the two entities involved in this stand, though much magnified by the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādins, need not worry the thinker, because this chain of avidyā, the cause, and individual soul, the effect, is beginningless. The above-mentioned defect, moreover, is valid only in the cases where the entities concerned, are matters of fact (vastu). Avidyā and its creations being undefinable as such, they are not open to such a criticism.[3] 'But even if the individual souls were accepted as the locus of avidyā', it soon came to be argued shortly after the Jīvāśrita-avidyā view had made its first appearance on the lines stated above, 'the eka-muktau sarva-mukti-prasaṅga', hurled against the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādins, remains unexplained. For, avidyā being one and common to all individual souls, its seats, its total annihilation on the plane of one of its substrata, viz., an elightened individual self, would naturally result in its cessation as a whole, and would thus tend to make supreme realisation on the part of

1. I.S. 324, 3-4.
2. VSM. 9, 3 and 4.
3. I.S. 324, 5 to 8.

one seeker, secure liberation for all[1]. With a view to explain away this difficulty, some of the succeeding Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādins, still classifiable under the head of 'aneka-Jīvāśrita eka-Brahmaviṣayaka-eka-avidyā' school, began to argue that though avidyā is essentially one and common to all individual souls, it has got innumerable powers (śakti) of concealing the noumenal truth of being. Each of these powers differs with each and every one of the innumerable individual selves. Hence, whenever the supreme realisation dawns upon one individual soul, it only destroys the avidyā, as endowed with the power of concealment, particular to that individual soul (Brahma-svarūpāvaraṇa-śakti-viśiṣṭa-avidyā-nāśaḥ), and not in general.[2] Hence, post-liberational continuance of the saṁsāra, with all other individual selves, engulfed therein, is quite possible even according to the aneka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā view. More radical among the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādins, however, feeling unsatisfied with the explanation offered above, gradually evolved out of the original vāda a complex 'aneka-jīvāśrita-eka-Brahmaviṣayaka-aneka-avidyā-vāda which was fraught with far-reaching influences. There is no one avidyā, common to all individual souls, they began to assert, but many, one avidyā having sole relations with one particular individual soul, and none else.[3] Therefore, even when the avidyā, specific to an individual soul, say 'A', is totally destoryed through the realisation of transcendental reality, which it had concealed so long, the avidyā pertaining to other individual souls, such as 'B', or 'C', or 'D', are not disturbed in the least, but go on concealing the ultimate truth and conjuring an apparent one in stead, as of yore.[4] It is true that the conception of one avidyā, subsisting in innumerable individual souls, veiling one ultimate truth of being and thus giving birth to an appearance of a universe, itself one and common to all, is simpler and easily comprehensible, assert

1. I.S. 831, 12 to 16.
2. V. P. pages—449 and 450.
3. V.P. page—449, line—1 and 2.
4. SDS. page—393, line 6 to 10.

the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vādins ;[1] but if one has to explain satisfactorily the mutual distinctions among the individual souls themselves, such as an enlightened Jīvan-mukta, a struggling seeker after the truth, as well as the darkly ignorant ordinary folks, and so on, one has to accept the much more complex aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā view.[2] This subtle stand that the principle, responsible for the appearance of diversity in stead of unity of being, is, not one, as is commonly misunderstood, but many, has been subtly hinted by the sacred texts, such as—'Indro māyābhiḥ puru-rūpa īyate', and the like,[3] point out the advocates of this second phase of Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vāda. The toughest problem, these thinkers have to deal with, is the unique feature of commonness, that pervades the world-views obtained by each and every individual soul. To make it more clear, if every Jīvātman has exclusively his own avidyā, concealing from him the fundamental truth of his being, and conjuring up before him a universe of infinite diversity in stead, it amounts to say that the infinite number of the Jīvātmans labour under the two-fold influence of the infinite number of avidyās, move in the infinite number of the universes, exclusively private and with nothing in common, and thus have separate world-views, mutually different from each other. But, however grand an instance of speculation it might be, such a position is totally contradicted by one of the least debated experiences of mankind. With the sole exception of the ultra-speculative aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vādins, none among the thinkers ever disputes the fact that the universe that is given in perception, during the state of Jāgrat, is one and common to all of its cognizers.......Such a notion of commonness, the facts being what they are, is a wrong notion, emphatically maintain the extremists among the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vādins.[4] Suppose, they say, some ten persons are beholding (what to them

1. I. S. 331, 22 to 332, 3.
2. VSM. 10, 1 to 11, 8.
3. VSM. 14, 5 to 15, 2.
4. VSM. 51, 6 and 7.

is appearing as real, but is really speaking) a phenomenal piece of silver. Their own avidyās being necessarily responsible for the appearance of such a hallucinatory object, the phenomenal thing is essentially a private thing for each of the spectators. There is nothing about it, which can be held as general. Yet, in spite of this strictly private character of the phenomenal silver, those ten persons are unanimous in that they are all seeing a piece of silver, which is commonly presented in their view. But such a unanimity of opinion, however widely and strongly it might have been held, must be ultimately discarded as baseless. In the same way, the unanimity among the thinkers as regards the commonness of the universe, perceived by each and every one of its innumerable perceptors, must be dismissed as a myth, if full justice is to be done to the relentless forces of logic, that compel one to accept the completely private character of the phenomenal object, working here also with same force. This highly speculative aneka-jīvāśrit-aneka-avidyā view, which arose directly out of the aneka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā view, the first and foremost stage in the evolution of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine, soon became itself a target of more revolutionary tendencies. 'It is with a view to account for the post-liberational existence of the empirical world',—it soon came to be argued,—'that the unique doctrine of aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā has been held, with the bold acceptance of the completely private character of the world-view, obtained by each individual soul as its irrefutable sequence. It is as the logical sequence of the stand that the notion of commonness, pervading the world-views, obtained by individual souls, is dismissed away as baseless, on the simile of a view of phenomenal silver, as obtained by a group of persons. But, it is worth while to think, if the similarity of empirical and phenomenal orders of being is at all to be accepted, there should be no reason, barring convincing arguments and irreconcilable apprehensional evidences, why it (i.e., the said similarity) should be restricted to the point of 'notion of commonness' alone, and not allowed to pervade the entire field of empirical reality. Given thus free reigns, it radically does

away with the doctrinal complexity, the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vādin labours under, and reduces the whole riddle of the appearance of diversity to a bold simplicity, quite legitimate and easily comprehensible as eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā view. There are neither innumerable individual souls, nor innumerable avidyās, veiling one transcendental reality, and thus giving rise to innumerable universes, but one individual soul, the seat of one avidyā, concealing one noumenal truth, and thus conjuring one empirical universe. All other individual souls, with their own avidyās and their own world-views, are, assert these eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādins[1], on the complete analogy of dreams, the creations of the avidyā of the individual soul, perceiver thereof. The sole criterion in the existence of the empirical world of diversity, as perceived by the individual soul, being the perception thereof, there is no reason, except love for needless complexity, why the world of diversity should not be ultimately traced back to the cause of the individual's perception of diversity, to wit—the avidyā of the perceiver. Had the innumerable individual souls with their own avidyās and their own world-views, been perceived by the individual soul, independently of his own avidyā (—a contingency, under which they aught to have been accepted as anything except the creations of the avidyā of the individual soul, perceiver thereof) the latter (i.e., the individual soul) would have continued to perceive the world of diversity even when himself enlightened and free from his own avidyā. He would have thus been never able to put an absolute end to the fundamental source of grief and pain. It cannot be argued against this that an individual soul continues to perceive the world of diversity, only so long as he himself is labouring under his own avidyā; for such an arrangement would totally upset the noble tradition of the enlightened teacher, conducting the ignorant seekers after truth along the path of self-realisation.[2] Hence, there are neither innumerable indi-

1. I.S. 333, 6 To 19.
2. I.S. 334, 1 To 4.

vidual souls with their own innumerable private avidyās, concealing the ultimate truth from each one of them and conjuring up in stead a private world of diversity before each of them—as the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vādins profess, nor the innumerable individual souls with their own innumerable private avidyās, concealing the ultimate truth from each of them and raising up instead a common-to-all world of diversity before all of them—as some less revolutionary among the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vādins would have it[1], but only one individual soul, with only one avidyā, veiling from it the essential truth of its being, and projecting instead one universe, full of diversity.[2] All other individual souls, which are perceived by the individual soul as different from him and as labouring under their own avidyās, are in their totality nothing but the creations of his own avidyā. Inevitably, hence, as soon as the avidyā of the individual soul is absolutely destroyed by the supreme enlightenment, all the universal show, including other individual selves and their avidyās and all that is automatically destroyed. Hence, the above-mentioned eka-muktau-sarva-mukti-prasaṅga, which had appeared as an unwelcome problem to the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādins, or the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādins of the aneka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā type, or the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā type is a welcome, logical sequence of the mysterious workings of avidyā, declares the eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādins.[3] The highly speculative world-view of this eka-jīva-vādin,—as he is briefly called,—though it develops out of the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda,— is far more subjectivistic in character than its predecessor. Working on the complete analogy of its dream and effacing the line, differentiating the empirical order of being from the phenomenal one to a greater extent, the eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādin firmly refuses to give the entire empirical world, including the Īśvara Himself, any more validity than as having

1. I.S. 337, 1 to 338, 5.
2. VSM. 28, 3 to 30, 3.
3. V.P. page—447.

been conjured up by the avidyā of the individual soul concerned.[1] Just as it is the dreamer, and he alone, who is the cause of, and hence is responsible for, the dream-world in all its aspects, it is he emphatically maintains[2], the individual soul himself that forms the ultimate cause and stay of the universe, both sentient and non-sentient, for the appearance of which, he, through his avidyā, is solely responsible. Owing its existence, in its multifarious aspects to the avidyā of the individual soul, the saṁsāra, whether sentient or otherwise, does inevitably end with the total annihilation of its constituent cause.[3] Just as the persons, dreamt of by the dreamer as well as their all activities, sorrows and joys,—all have their semblance of existence, only so long as the dreamer continues to be in the dream-state, and inevitably dissolve away, the moment the dreamer transcends that state, exactly in the same way all the phenomenon of saṁsāra continues to appear as existent and undergoing transformations, only so long as the individual soul, labouring under the conjuring influence of his own avidyā, continues to perceive them. The moment he puts an absolute end to his avidyā and transcends to his essential nature, i.e., Brahmahood, the infinite deversity of being, both sentient and non-sentient, simply dissolves away and does not exist.[4] Thus, all other individual souls, say 'B', 'C', 'D', as perceived by the particular individual soul, say —'A', during the empirical state of being are but the creations of his own avidyā and nothing more[5], and hence it is not only futile but also baseless—asserts the eka-jīva-vādin,—to account for their empirical existence, after the perceiver thereof, the 'A', has woken out of his dream. Therefore, all the unsuccessful efforts of the orthodox Jivāśrita-avidyā-vādins of the two former types to account for the continuance of saṁsāra, even after the liberation of the perceiver thereof

1. SLS, 20,12 to 14.
2. SLS. 12, 18 and 19.
3. I.S. 338, 6 to 23.
4. VSM. 45, 2 and 3,
5. VSM. 38,3 to 5.

are but the indications of their inability to face the logical consequences of their own stands[1]. But, if the complete cessation of the appreciation of the world, both sentient and non-sentient, consequent upon the total annihilation of the avidyā of the apprehender, is inevitably followed by the overall dissolution of the world itself, an objector might put forth a question, how is it that even now we are apprehending it? For, it might have been put to an absolute end, long long ago, by the enlightened individual souls, such as Śuka etc. To this the eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādin returns a unique reply. He says, the objector is apprehending the world, because it is the creation of his own avidyā; all other individual souls, including even the liberated ones, are the creations of his own self; being no more than this, the illusory enlightenment of the illusory Śuka does not,—for it cannot,—bring about the complete dissolution of the dream, (of which it is a part), the objector is dreaming of.[2] Ever faithful to his fundamental stand that the world in all its complexity is but a dream, which the individual soul, the perceiver, has been dreaming of from times beginningless, the eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādin resolutely maintains that even the enlightened 'guru' from whom the individual soul seeks guidance in his search after the truth, is also but a creation of his (individual soul's ) own avidyā. That such a guru should help the individual soul to wake out of this painful, beginningless, dream of finite being to behold his own essential Self, is not at all improbable, says he. For, does not some event, though itself forming a part and parcel of the self-same dream,—he poses a significant question,—lead to the ultimate dissolution thereof, and thus help the dreamer to transcend to the waking state? Why should be there besides anything illogical and impractical about a false thing putting an absolute end to another false one?[3] Do all advaitic thinkers not unanimously accept that the ultimate cause of saṁsāra, viz. avidyā, which has got

1. SLS. 20, 16 to 18.
2. SLS. 20, 18 and 19
3. VSM. 235, 1 To 236, 8.

but conditional validity, is put to a complete end, through the rise of Vidyā, which being but a particular vṛtti, is of no greater validity ? Naturally, in philosophical scheme of this revolutionary eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādin, the individual soul occupies a most dominating position. In stead of the secondary place into which he was thrust by the Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādin, he has been given here a central, all-important position. For all of the philosophical problems are solved with a reference to him. Indeed, this strong emphasis on the individual soul with his avidyā has been one of the unique characteristics of the entire Jīvāśrita-avidyā school from the very beginning; and, it actually grows more and more prominent, till it occupies all-predominent position, ascribed to it by the eka-jīva-vādin. The objective review of the successive phases of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-doctrine has made this clear beyond the least shadow of doubt. Naturally, more emphasis is laid on the essential transcendental aspect of him, than is done by the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins. It is thus emphatically maintained that though the individual soul, the only seat of the only avidyā, owes its own existence as an individual soul to that very avidyā, that mysterious entity, heterogeneous in character, non-sentient by nature, beginningless, source of all, which conceals away the essential truth of being from him, yet it is essentially different from it[1]. Sentient by nature, unborn, the individual soul is eternally identical with the noumenal reality of being, the Brahman. The character, which he assumes during the empirical state of being, is but super-positional, avidyaic, conditional in validity, and hence incapable of affecting him in his fundamentals, it is stressed. This eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā view represents the fourth stage in the evolution of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine, the preceeding ones being,—(a) aneka-Jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā view; (b) aneka-jīvāśrita-bhinnāvaraṇa-śaktika-eka-avidyā view; (c) and aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā view and it arrives at the conclusions, strikingly similar to those drawn by Sarvajñātman,

1. VSM. 33, 10 to 14.

the protagonist of the eka-Cidāśrita-eka-ajñāna-vāda as early as the 9th century. On the other hand, it represents the second stage in the evolution of the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda. For, though not generally accepted as such, both the aneka-Jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā view and the consequent eka-Jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā view do present the fundamentals of this subtle doctrine, without which its subtler and later forms (which commonly go for the doctrine itself) would not have been possible. Taken by themselves, these two views certainly maintain philosophical out looks, which deserve to be regarded as the varieties of the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda Thus, while the former enunciates the doctrine of innumerable universes, conjured up by innumerable avidyās, seated in innumerable individual souls, and thus maintains that the world (i.e. sṛṣṭi) is not one and common-to-all, but is different with each and every one of its perceivers (i.e. dṛṣṭi), the latter even goes further, refuses the innumerable sṛṣṭis, created by the innumerable dṛṣṭis, as baseless, and propounds only one Sṛṣti created by only one dṛṣṭi (i.e., the apprehension of the individual soul, arising out of the avidyā, seated herein). Both are unanimous over the complete cessation of the sṛṣti, consequent upon the total annihilation of the dṛṣti, brought about by the absolute removal of avidyā through the knowledge of noumenal truth. Soon, the philosophical interpretation of the riddle of existence, as offered by the fourth phase of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā school, came to be regarded as the final outcome of the logical reasoning, set in motion by the earliest protagonists of the Jīvāṣrita-avidyā doctrine. This has been more than amply borne out by the fact (inferred, on the doctrinal, rather than historical, grounds) that the two concluding phases of the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda do not deal with the entire realm of philosophical deliberations, like the earlier ones; instead of this, they take the conclusions, reached by their predecessors for well-established, restrict themselves to the field of the world as presented during the state of jāgrat and arrive at unique conclusion of their own. Thus, the advocates of these last two phases of the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda can be safely classified as the eka-jīvāśrita-

eka-avidyā-vādins as well. The main consideration, that compelled the eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādin to denounce the āneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā view, which had otherwise satisfactorily explained away the difficulty, under which the aneka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādin was labouring, was that since the avidyā, the ultimate transformatory material cause of all universe, has been unanimously held as dependent on the manifesting effulgence of the Self for its very existence, there is no justification whatsoever for assuming that it and its creations continue to exist, even when the manifesting effulgence of the Self that had imparted the semblance of existence in the view of that particular individual soul, has been switched away from them for ever. Judging from this point of view, the eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādin had refuted the stand of his predecessor, the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vādin as logically inconsistent. The self-same standard of judgment, which can be briefly explained as the non-sentient, when not manifested by the Sentient is simply no-existent (jaḍasya ajñāta-sattvam anupapannam),—comes to be adapted by these neo-eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādins, the heralds of the third phase the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda. But, while their predecessors apply it to refute the post-liberational existence of the world, they extend its influence whithin the realm of empirical reality itself. Both being equally the creations of avidyā, there is no justification,—they argue,[1]—for granting the things, empirical, a higher degree of truth than what is assigned to the things, phenomenal. Thus having done away with the line of demarkation that differentiates the two lower orders of reality from each other, they emphatically maintain that just as the dream-world with all its developments is produced by the dreaming vision (Dṛṣṭi) of the dreamer, and hence has no existence, except during the dream-period, in the same way the diversity of being that goes by the name of saṁsāra is existent only so long as it is being cognized by the vision ; because it is actually produced by the apprehending vision (Dṛṣṭi) of the individual

1. VSM. 72, 2 To5.

soul. In short, it, has no unapprehensional existence (anjñāta-sattā).[1] In order to illustrate their stand, they often dwell over the state of suṣupti. Unimpeachable authorities, it is pointed out, emphatically maintain that during the state of suṣupti, where the vision of the individual soul, responsible for all types of erroneous cognitions of diversity of being, lies dormant,[2] there exists no world of diversity as such, independent in its existence. It is because it is non-existent at that time, that it is not apprehended (na tu tat-dvitīyaṁ asti, tatonyat vibhaktaṁ yat paśyet). Thus every time the individual soul enters into the state of suṣupti, the world of diversity, which his apprehension (dṛṣṭi) had conjured up before him during the states of jāgrat and svapna, dissolves away ; and every time he wakes out of it, a new world of diversity is presented before him by his vision (dṛṣṭi), active again.[3] Thus, there being ever-new world every morning, the notion of sameness, attached to the mutually different members of the world-view-series, obtained by the individual soul, is a wrong notion based on the incapacity to grasp the truth.[4] Now the sole reason behind the factual absence of the world of diversity during the state of suṣupti, can be nothing but the temporary cessation of the conjuring vision of the individual soul. Owing its emergence and its continuance in being to the latter, the former cannot be existent when the latter is not so. Thus, the abject dependence of the world of diversity on the apprehension thereof has been convincingly established by the negative evidence, offered by the state of suṣupti. Now there is no reason why it should not be accepted in the fields of jāgrat and svapna too,—ask the protagonists of the third phase of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda. Therefore, it is sometimes stated, there are only two realms of being, viz. apprehensional (prātītika) and transcendental. The former includes the two, empirical and phenomenal,

1. VSMT. 51, 4 and 5 .
2. VSM. 44, 4.
3. VSM. 53, 5 to 54,5.
4. VSMT 54, 17 To 20.

orders of being, maintained by the earliers.[1] The fact that the things empirical continue to exist, like the things phenomenal, only so long as they are being apprehended and have hence no validity, independent of apprehension, is again pointed out by the undefinability of their essential character, which has been unanimously accepted by all the advaitins on the analogy of the phenomenal objects. Had they been endowed with un-apprehensional existence (ajñatā-sattā), they would have been totally different from the latter in character; and it would not have been possible to deduce the inexplicability of their character from the analogy of the latter.[2] It is not at all necessary that the absence of anything more substantial than dependent-on-apprehension existence (dṛṣṭi-samasattāka-sṛṣṭi), must hopelessly upset the common transactions of the empirical world; for all that the common run of worldly transactions requires is not the positive truth of the validity of the empirical objects, independent-of-apprehension, but only the absence of the negation thereof; and that, the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādin points out, is always there, as one of the fundamental errors.[3] In amplification of his explanation, he now and then points to the world-view, as obtained during the state of dream, and concludes[4] that just as the transactions, conducted in the dream-world, require only the absence of the contradiction of independent-of-apprehension validity of the objects involved therein, the worldly affairs, wherein the individual soul labouring under the influence of his own avidyā, finds himself engaged, also demand nothing more. For, though the wrold-view as presented by the dream-state is open to a sublation, easier and earlier than the one presented by the jāgrat-state, both spring out of one fundamental cause, i.e., avidyā seated in the individual soul, both reflect similar tendencies, so long as they are being presented, and being such, both are governed by identical requirments. The general belief that

1. VSM. 51, 1 to 5.
2. VSM. 48-1 to 50, 3.
3. VSM. 50, 4 to 6.
4. VSM. 50, 7 To 10.

the objects of empirical reality are cognized through the means of right cognition should not lead one to postulate the pre-apprehensional existence, and hence a greater degree of validity, of empirical objects in comparison with the phenomenal ones. Since such a belief, however widely it might have been held, invariably turns out to be founded on slender grounds, asserts the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādin. The belief would have been valid, had the senses etc. been valid causes of the apprehension of empirical objects. Enjoying a real causal efficiency with references to neither right cognition, nor wrong cognition, nor mere cognition, right or wrong, the senses etc. do not as a matter of fact constitute the real cause of the empirical knowledge. Censured by this factual proof, the invariable concomitance that seems to bind the pramāṇas and the empirical knowledge, necessarily betrays its assumptional character, akin to that operating in the dream-state.[1] Therefore, exactly like the apprehensions of the dream-objects during the state of dream, those of the empirical objects also necessarily turn out to be nothing but māyic and hence incapable of establishing the existence of their objects, independent-of-apprehension.[2] The conclusion that the empirical objects, like the apparent ones, exist only so long as they are being cognized, is again arrived at, when one considers the thoroughly avidyaic character, which they share with the latter. For, like that of the phenomenal ones, of the empirical objects too, the avidyā, and it alone, constitutes the only cause, both fundamental and immediate. The causal relations which seem to operate between the evolved forms of avidyā, such as a lump of clay and a jar, are wholly assumptional like those, working between the dream-obejcts, during the state of dream. And, if there is complete concord of opinion as regards the existence of the phenomenal objects, as being entirely dependent on the apprehension thereof, (dṛṣṭi-sama-sattāka-sṛṣṭi), there should be no hesitation in announcing the same ver-

1. VSM. 55, 3 to 61, 6.
2. SLS. 70, 24 to 71, 2.

dict in the case of the empirical ones too; because both of them are made of the same stuff, i.e., avidyā, declares the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādin.[1] Strictly faithful to his unique fundamental stand that each and every thing, superpositional in character being necessarily dependent for its very existence on the apprehension thereof, the empirical objects cease to exist the moment they cease being apprehended, and are created anew by the conjuring avidyā of the individual soul, when again the apprehension takes place, the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādin emphatically maintains that the process of creation and dissolution is ever going on in the realm of empirical world too. Every night when the conjuring vision of the individual soul gets submerged in the fundamental cause thereof, to wit, avidyā, the whole world, conjured up thereby during the state of jāgrat, invariably dissolves away; and every morning, when the former stirs again into activity, the latter, entirely different from the preceeding one, springs up again into existence. And, as the process of emergence and submergence of the empirical world thus occurs each and every day, the revealed texts concerned with the problems of cosmology needs be taken at their implied meaning and should be interpreted as such, it is declared.[2] How much ever subjectivistic in outlook may this third phase of the Doctrine of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi, as enunciated by these neo-eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādins appears to be, it does not represent the finalmost stage in the evolution of this unique doctrine. No doubt it marks a sharp advance over the orthodox eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādins, i. e., representatives of the second phase, in as much as it refuses to grant the realm of empirical reality anything more than the existence dependent-on-apprehension, and thus tends to equate it to the phenomenal one, labelling both as 'prātītika' in validity. It nevertheless grants it an actual external existence at the time of apprehension. Being thus not perfectly idealistic in its interpretation of the world of diversity, it soon came to be by-passed by even more

1. VSM. 61, 6 to 63, 8.
2. SLS. 71, 1 to 20.

extremists within the fold of the eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda. For, these latter soon began to propound through their relentless logic that not only the objects in the realm of empirical reality do not enjoy a validity of their own, as independent of the apprehension thereof, but they are also as good as non-existent in their extra-apprehensional (jñānātirikta) aspect. Thus, like the belief in the pre-apprehensional or the post-apprehensional existence of an empirical object, the belief in the extra-apprehensional existence thereof, too, is a mis-belief founded in ignorance. What is generally mistaken for an object of apprehension (sṛṣṭi), is, really speaking the apprehension (dṛṣṭi) itself.[1] Neither the 'perception', nor the 'inference', nor the 'revealed authority', nor the 'presumption', can verify the stand that the empirical object has got an extra-apprehensional validity of its own, it is dialectically argued. For, the perceptional apprehension of an empirical object cannot apprehend, by itself, along with the object, its character of extra-apprehensionality. Equally illogical it would be to maintain that while a particular object is apprehended by a particular perceptional apprehension, its extra-apprehensionality is apprehended by another perceptional apprehension.[2] The extra-apprehensionality of the empirical object being beyond the scope of perceptional apprehension, inferential apprehension thereof becomes an impossibility. For, how much ever seemingly plausible arguments are put forward to infer the extra-apprehensionality of the object, each and every one of them ultimately turns out to be fallacious;[3] simply because the perceptional evidence, that forms the direct or otherwise basis of the inferential process, is fundamentally lacking here. As regards the third means of right cognition, to wit, revealed authority, solely concerned that it is with the propogation of the oneness of being, it is the last resort to fall back upon in one's attempts

1. SLS. 72, 6 to 8.
2. VSM. 73, 1 to 79, 3.
3. VSM. 79, 4 to 0, 5.

to establish extra-apprehensional diversity of being. Even the stray deliberations over the diversity of being, which are to be met with in the texts cannot be reasonably taken for the means of establishing beyond doubts the intended extra-apprehensional truth of the empirical objects.[1] For, they are invariably meant for a close scrutiny and ultimate dismissal. Nor is it reasonable to argue that apprehension itself being impossible without an object external to it, the extra-apprehensionality of the empirical objects is a fact, established by presumption. For, the apprehension does not, as a matter of fact, depend on the object, either for its rise, or for its stay, or for its act of manifestation. The apprehension does not depend on the object for its rise, because apprehension, in its pure form, is eternal; in its empirical form, it has been seen rising without any external object, corresponding to it. It does not depend upon the object for its stay. Because, apprehension, in its pure form, has got the eternal Ātman for its substratum ; in its empirical form, it is the individual soul, that forms its seat. Thus, in both the cases, the object does not provide the required substratum. It does not depend upon the object for its act of manifestation. For, being of the self-manifesting character, the apprehension does not need the object in its operation, nor it is invariably concomitant with the object. Therefore, it is indeed an unwarranted presumption that an apprehension itself being impossible without a corresponding external object, it necessarily indicates its extra-apprehensionality.[2] All of the means of right cognition thus failing to establish beyond doubt the extra-apprehensional existence of the empirical world in its multifarious phases, assert these extremist Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādins, there is no justification for maintaining that it does so. What is ignorantly characterized as an external reality (i.e. as sṛṣṭi) and as an object of apprehension, is really an internal one and an apprehension itself (dṛṣṭi). Just as apprehension itself appears in the state of dream in the

1. VSM. 80, 6 to 83, 5.
2. VSM. 83, 5 to 88, 4.

garbs of apprehension and the object thereof, likewise indeed is the case in the state of jāgrat too.[1] Of the nature of apprehension, and it alone (dṛṣṭi-mātrātmakaṁ jagat)[2] the empirical world (i.e., sṛṣṭi), is devoid of external existence and independent truth, even conditional. Like the world perceived in the dream-state, it is a mere hallucinatory phenomenon, conjured up by the avidyā seated in the individual soul and veiling therefrom his essential nature, which is ever-pure, immortal, changeless, secondless and blissful, concludes the extremist Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādin.

This brief survey of the prominent phases in the evolution of the great Jīvāśrita-avidyā school is quite sufficient to acquaint us with the chequered career of the great current of advaitic thought, which gradually ascended to a unique position in the domain of Indian philosophy. It appeared in its first distinguishable form in the immediately post-Śaṅkara period and drew towards itself a considerable number of independent thinkers on account of its inherent merits. It gradually gathered strength to evolve along the lines, set down by relentless logic, successively passed through the stages, characterizable as (a) 'aneka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda', (b) 'aneka-jīvāśrita-bhinnāvaraṇaśaktika-eka-avidyā-vāda', (c) 'aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda,' and finally culminated in the unique doctrine of (d) 'eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda'. It advanced later on, solely concerning itself with the empirical world along highly speculative lines, came to be known as Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda, and finished with an unconditional equation of the world of diversity as given in perception, during the state of jāgrat, with one, apprehended during the dream-state. The objective study of the philosophical out-look, as maintained by the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādins is enough to acuquaint one with the other direction that the advaitic thought, once unchallengeably placed by the great Śaṅkara as the most plausible explanation of the riddle of existence, took itself to, in its attempt to acquire

1. VSM. 88, 5 to 90, 8.
2. VSM. 91, 1.

fulness of conception and subtlety of details, and finally arrived at conclusions, at once unique.

(D) With so much of detailed and first-hand acquaintance with the salient features of the two principal currents of post-Śaṅkara advaitic thought, widely recognized as Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda and Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda, in possession, it is indeed very difficult to resist the temptation of weighing them against each other. The most obvious point, with which the student of the philosophical outlooks, maintained by the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin and the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādin, is unmistakably struck, is the almost complete unanimity of conception, cherished by these two great traditions, as regards the essential character of the noumenal reality. However mutually conflicting their views might have been in other spheres of philosophical speculation, both are unanimous in their view of the transcendental. truth of being, known as Brahman, because of its all-prevading character, or as Ātman, because it constitutes the innermost essence of each and every thing, or as Akṣara, because of its deathless character, or as Cit, because of its sentient nature. None of the two disputes either that it is the ajñāna about the transcendental reality, which is mainly responsible for the apperance of diversity in stead of unity of being. Both agree that it is the Brahman that constitutes the object of ajñāna. Coming to the fundamentals of this ultimate transformatory constituent cause of universe, to wit, avidyā, here too we find a general agreement between the two. Both regard, broadly speaking, of course, it as non-sentient, heterogeneous in character, endowed with two-fold activity and so on. In spite of this general agreement over the ultimate causes of the phenomenon of saṁsāra, the root of the unbridgeable difference of opinion between the two, can be found in this very sphere, and that is the problem of the relation between these two ultimate causes. Is it only that of subject and object? Or is it of the character of the seat and the seated (āśraya-āśarayi-bhāva) too? The Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin replies in affirmative; the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādin, in negative. This sharp clash of opinion casts its moulding influence, not only over the empirical and the pheno-

menal orders of being, but it also affects the fundamental conceptions of the ultimate causes of being. Its clearer repercussions on the principle of transcendental reality become apparent, when each of the two tries to enunciate the causal character of it, in his own way. The stand of the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin puts him in a more advantageous position, wherefrom he can consistently deal with the phenomena of emergence, existence and submergence of the empirical universe as the evolution, transformation and devolution of one, undefinable yet undeniable, matter,—matter characterized as avidyā, ajñāna, Māyā or prakṛti etc.,—veiling and operating against the sustaining and manifesting background of one Cit. This oneness of the ultimate transformatory material cause, though adopted in the opening phases (-represented by 'aneka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda' and 'aneka-jīvāśrita - bhinnāvaraṇa - śaktika - eka-avidyā - vāda), the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādin has soon to forego (as he does in the subsequent phase characterized as 'aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda') and even when he enunciates it again (in the succeeding stage of 'eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda), he does so in an entirely different manner. Consequentially, the philosophical outlook, as maintained by the former, is simpler than that enunciated by the latter, which is at once complex and highly speculative. The sharpest repercussions of the said divergence of opinion, however, are to be met with in the spheres of the two lower realities. Indeed, the very terms of Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin and Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādin, that came to be gradually applied to them, who could have been equally reasonably characterized as Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādin and Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādin respectively, clearly indicate how even the uncritical reviewers of syncretistic tendencies of later epoch did not fail to grasp this fundamental fact. Like that of Māyā, the ultimate transformatory constituent cause of empirical and phenomenal realities, the doctrine of individual soul, one of the most controversial problems of philosophical deliberations as developed by these two currents of thought, has many a point of similarity and dissimilarity. In the philosophical set-up of the former, the position of the individual soul is, if not secon-,

dary, definitely not all-prominent. Built up on the lines of Sāṃkhya thought, it conceives of it as the sentient aspect of the universal phenomena, into which the ultimate Māyā seated in the transcendental Brahman, evolves out in the beginning of the creation. It is true that he too spares no pains to elucidate the principle, which, for all practical purposes, necessarily remains highly important. Neverthelesss, there can be no denying the fact that his Brahmāśrita-Brahmaviṣayaka-eka-avidyā view naturally tends to make him more favourably inclined towards the explanation of the riddle of finite existence from a stand, essentially different from and higher than the individual soul, perplexed therewith. The Jīvāśrita-avidyā view, on the other hand, clearly puts a great emphasis on the individual soul in the doctrinal set-up, as the seat of the mysterious entity, responsible for the apprearance of diversity of being. The principle of noumenal reality necessarily remains clearly uninvolved in the scheme of the latter than it does in that of the former. For, while in the philosophical set-up of the former, the transcendental reality is involved in the riddle of the emipirical one, in two-fold capacity, in that of the latter, it is concerned with the realm of conditional being, only as the object of the conjuring Māyā seated in the individual soul. This emphasis on the principle of Jīvātman as the central pivot of all metaphysical build-up diminishes gradually as the evolution of the advaitic thought runs along the lines of Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda, and increases rapidly on the other hand as the same takes itself along the channels of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda. The concluding phase of the latter, characterizable as eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda, clearly shows to what extent this emphasis on the individual soul, as the central point, from which every aspect of the mystery of life ought to be solved,-came to be laid by the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādins. Naturally, the former is, from the beginning to the end of his career, aneka-jīva-vādin; but the latter, though he accepts the plurality of the individual soul up to the third stage in the evolution of his outlook, ultimately discards it and emerges out as an uncompromising advocate of eka-jīva-vāda. Even in the third stage, referrable as aneka-

jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda, his conception of plurality is quite different from that of his rival; the latter may be said therefore to represent a higher grade of Vivarta-vāda than one, maintained by the former, if one may adopt the gradation, ably offered by Sarvajñātman in his Saṁkṣepa-Śārīraka. Both again have their own sound arguments to put forward in the controversy over the problem of locus of avidyā. It is indeed very difficult to define which is superior to which (And, that it should be so is quite explicable; concerned as the controversy is with the undefinable avidyā, the solution to it must be necessarily inexplicable). Even then the balance slightly weighs down in favour of the latter. This is the conclusion when one scrutinizes the poor attempts of the former to explain away in harmony with his fundamental Brahmāśrita-avidyā stand, the rising of the supreme enlightenment and subsequent dissolution of avdiyā and its products, which unanimously take place on the plane of individual soul, seeking after truth.[1] Turning to the non-sentient aspect of the universe, one finds the divergence of opinion wider and deeper. The fundamental simplicity of the eka-Brahmāśrita-eka-avidyā view encourages the former to conceive the empirical world as one and common to all individual souls, looking upon it; in this he gets straight support from the authoritative texts, which sing of the creation of the universe as a cosmic evolution of avidyā-entity, operating against the sustaining background of one Cit. The case is, however, different with the latter. As an irresistable corollary of his fundamental Jīvāśrita-avidyā view, the latter has soon to abandon the stand that the empirical universe is one and common to all individual souls, looking upon it, though accepted in the first and the second stages of evolution, and has to propound of complex doctrine that each individual soul has his own universe, strictly private, and with nothing in common (as represented in the third stage.). And, though he returns to it again in the fourth stage, it is far from being similar to that, maintained by his rival. In this, not only he gets no

1. 6, 12 to 14.

help from the supreme authorities, but he has actually to circumvent the revealation, conveyed through them. The order of the empirical world, as arranged by the former, betrays, as has been said before, a strong influence of the Sāṃkhya metaphysics; that, as developed by the latter, is free from such foreign influences. The view of the empirical world as being one and common to all cognizers thereof, which the former developes out of his Brahmāśrita-avidyā view, naturally makes him anxious to maintain that even when one of the individual souls transcends avidyā and achieves supreme liberation, the show of finite saṁsāra continues to maintain its conditional existence.[1] Being a protagonist of aneka-jīva-vāda, the former advocates that all of the individual souls are caught in the snares of one and common-to-all saṁsāra, and it is one by one that they attain liberation therefrom.[2] The eka-jīva-vādin on the other hand, feels himself quite unrestrained to hold that the supreme liberation of an individual soul being quite impossible without a total extinction of avidyā, it is not only irresponsible but also illogical to accept a post-liberational existence of the saṁsāra. The moment the individual soul achieves supreme liberation, all other individual souls, as have appeared to him during the state of empirical being, get liberated. Thus, the latter holds a view on the problem, exactly dissimilar to that, accepted by the former.[3] The stands of the both have their own advantages and disadvantages. The former, while he can satisfactorily account for the notion of commonness, attached to the empirical world by the cognizers thereof, viz, individual souls, is against heavy odds, when called upon to explain as to how the world can continue to have the self-same semblance of existence, even after its ultimate transformatory constituent cause, the avidyā, has met its sublation in the individual.[4] Exactly reverse is the case with the latter. The logical developments of his own fundamental tendencies are

1. VPS. 192, 24 to 193, 3.
2. VP. 32.
3. VP. 32, 7.
4. SLS. 21, 11 to 22, 2.

also largely responsible for the increasingly unique world-view that the latter gradually develops. The thickening process that had appeared in the evolution of the doctrine of Māyā as early as Padmapāda's times, attains perfection at the hands of the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādin. The latter, on the other hand, pays little attention to such a function. This has its inevitable effects on the world-views, enunciated by each. The world-view, as developed by the former, is more clear-cut, less complex, less bold and more orthodox at the same time, than one, as maintained by the latter. While the tendency that dominates the former's world view is to grant more and more validity to the empirical realm of being and to differentiate it more and more emphatically from the phenomenal one, that, dominating the latter's out-look, is to reduce it more and more to the level of the apparent reality. The line of demarkation that differentiates the two lower realms of reality from each other, becomes more and more definite in the outlook of the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins, on the other hand, it sharply falls upon bad days in the domain of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādins and disappears ultimately. The full impact of these characteristic tendencies, moving against each other, is felt in the concluding phases of the two great currents of thought. Not only the empirical objects are granted a completely extra-apprehensional existence of their own[1] which is also independent of apprehension but even the phenomenal objects are allowed to have an external, actual existence by the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins. The only distinction that they make between them is, that while the empirical are public, i.e., common-to-all, and have extra-apprehensional existence, the phenomenal are private and mental. The absence of extra-apprehensionality of the latter does not mean that they are of purely subjectivistic nature, it is warned. It only means that they, as contrasted with the empirical, have no existence, independent of apprehension thereof. On the other hand, the strong subjectivistic tone that dominates the outlook of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vādin from

1. PD. Chapter—4, verse—37.

the very beginning, grows more and more prominent and pervades the whole field in the end.[1] It refuses, at first, to grant the empirical world of diversity an actual existence, independent of apprehension thereof (as we have seen in the phase, represented by the neo-eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādins), and then reduces it even below the par of the apparent reality, as conceived of by his rivals, by refusing it firmly anything more as extra-apprehensional truth and existence (as we have noted in the later phase, developed by later neo-eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vādins). Thus, while the epistemological stand of the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins[2] as their very denotation indicates, is fully realistic, that of their rivals, in the culminating stage at least, can be safely characterized as highly idealistic. Consequentially, among the world-views, maintained by these warring advaitins, that, as held by Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins, offers as clear a distinction from the Buddhistic one, than does the same, as developed by Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādins. The former, by virtue of the validity independent-of-apprehension as well as extra-apprehensional, bestowed by him upon the empirical reality, can clearly point out that the superpositional character of the world, advocated by him, is but apparently similar to that, enunciated by the Vijñāna-vādin, in as much as there is, really speaking, no factual silmilarity between his and the Buddhist's stand. In his opinion, he can point out, the empirical objects, though superposed on the under-lying eternal principle of knowledge (i.e. Brahman), are yet capable of action and continuous existence of their own,[3] independent of the apprehension thereof, and endowed with extra-apprehensional validity.[4] He can further maintain that the superpositionality of them does not, as it does in the view of the Vijñāna-vādin, indicate, according to him, their unconditional essencelessness, but it only signifies their fundamental undefinability.[5] The

1. SDS. 459, 12-13.
2. VPS. 71, 14 to 72 ,7.
3. VPS. 74, 22 to 75, 4.
4. PPV. 83, 25 to 84, 1 ; 84, 13-14.
5. VPS. 42, 9 to 13.

latter (viz., the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vādin), with his view of the world, betraying strong similarities with the outlook of the Vijñāna-vādin on the other hand, can differentiate his stand from the Buddhistic one by dwelling upon the essential character of the ground of the superpositional universe, to wit, Brahman, alone. Owing their rise, to the philosophical speculations of the great disciples of the illustrious Śaṅkara, it would be certainly too much to expect the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda or the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda in a clearly cognizable form in the earlier epoches of the advaitic thought. Interestingly, however, a close scrutiny of the earlier works does reflect these characteristic tendencies towards the problem of finite being, present even in the fundamental source of advaitism, viz. the Upaniṣads themselves. Scattered here and there, vague and fluid, often confused with each other, are to be found in the earliest texts, the indications, not only of the less speculative and the more easily cognizable Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda, but also of the subtle rival thereof.

Taking into consideration the preliminary stage of philosophical speculation, represented by the revealed texts, it seems quite natural that the former should predominate the Upaniṣadic outlook in general; yet, by no means are absolutely absent the hints towards the latter, some of them indeed quite emphatic. The unique rise and growth of the subjectivistic tendencies within the fold of Buddhistic thought, could not but have encouraged similar trends within the orthodox circles of speculation; and though few reliable sources of information are allowed to us as regards this era of pre-Śaṅkara development, the advaitic outlook of Ācārya Gauḍapāda indicates clearly how even in the pre-Śaṅkara phases of evolution of advaitic thought, the current that came to emerge much later on as Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda, was not only not out-done into complete obscurity by the rising wave of Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda, gradually gathering more and more strength, but it also sometimes asserted its distinct individuality. The richly complex, and the widely comprehensive, philosophical outlook of Śaṅkara himself, bafflingly presents both the tendencies, equally powerful. Taking into consideration his

relentless attack on the Vijñāna-vāda,[1] one would have included him within the fold of Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda, had it not been for the subtle arguments, put forward by him elsewhere[2] in favour of the uncompromising Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda. This unique phenomenon of co-development of these two mutually-conflicting tendencies is not restricted to the earlier or the intermediate stages in the evolution of the advaitic thought. For, though soon after the flourish of Śaṅkara, a general distinction came to be accepted and observed, instances are not at all rare,[3] where the staunch protagonists of one view often crossed floor and adopted the arguments, which would fit in the scheme advocated by their opponents only.[4] This inter-exchange of influences between the two vādas (which, by the way, is mostly one-way affair, the cases of the Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vādins, adopting their rivals' arguments,[5] being more frequent) clearly demonstrates the fact that not only the great advaitins of the opening and the intervening epoches, but also those of concluding ones, overwhelmingly concerned that they all were with the establishment of noumenal reality of being, looked upon the philosophical investigation of the two lower realms of being as not fruitful in itself, but as helpful in their ultimate goal, and hence they did not bother about the subtle inconsistencies in their stands over the problems, related thereunto, so long as their vital-most fundamental principles were not affected.

(E) Any serious attempt towards the full-fledged evaluation of the contribution of Pandit Vācaspati Miśra, to which we now turn with such an exhaustive and comprehensive acquaintance with the principal currents of thought, that gradually evolved after his flourish, should be always governed by an impartial and objective realisation of the peculiarities of the age or period, in which he made his appearance and worked. A dis-

1. B.S.S.B. 2, 2, 5, 28 to 2, 2, 5,31.
2. G.K.B. 2nd and 4th chapter.
3. PPV 261, 21 to 262, 5.
4. VPS. 234, 21 to 26.
5. VP. 376 to 378.

regard for this essential factor in criticism would otherwise lead the student of his influence over the later evolution of thought, either to minimize it ruthlessly or to exaggerate it immoderately, the cases, both of which should be equally unrelishing to the accurate thinking. The detailed study of the earlier phases of advaitic thought, which preceeded Vācaspati's activity, which we have enjoyed in the previous chapters and have at the same time tried to take a critical view thereof, at different places, makes it clear as day-light that Vācaspati's activity undeniably lies in a period, most significant and fraught with far-reaching influences in the centuries-old history of advaitic thought. The almost unparalleled contributions of the great Śaṅkara having already succeeded in securing for ever the highest position in the domain of Indian thought for his favourite philosophy, the advaitic current of thought was gradually tending towards fulness of conception, richness of details and precision in subtleties. It was in this highly formative and impressionable stage of evolution, that a number of great advaitins appeared and determined the channels of future development. And, Vācaspati, our illustrious philosopher, is one of them. While Padmapāda and Sureśvara initiate the Brahmāśrita-avidyā school, that later on evolves into the comprehensive Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda, Maṇḍana and Vācaspati take a more bold step, adopt a more subjectivistic outlook and form the equally great Jīvāśrita-avidyā school, destined to develop into the highly speculative Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda. Though the credit necessarily goes to Maṇḍana as the first originator of the revolutionery Jīvāśrita-avidyā view, equally great tributes must be paid to his immediate successor, Vācaspati Miśra, who through his great commentaries, not only rescued the unique view from obscurity into which it had fallen, but also placed it on a rock-firm basis and developed it to meet the increasingly sharp attacks of its critics. Indeed, the popular tradition, which, ignoring the historical facts, actually attributes the very origination of the view to Vācaspati, is itself a sure indication of the great esteem for and warm appreciation of the unique importance of his contribution, that the later advaitic

philosophers came to cherish unanimously. And even when a due consideration for chronological data discourages a modern critic to join in the traditional appreciation, it equally emphatically justifies him in holding Vācaspati as the first herald of the next revolutionary stage in the evolution of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā view, to wit, the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda. For, though the traditional authorities sometimes tend to ascribe the Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine in all its complexities, implicit as well as explicit, to the great Maṇḍana himself,[1] the comprehensive survey of the original works of the great advaitins of the Jivāśrita-avidyā-school has made it amply clear to us that it is only in its first stage and in its elementary form that the Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine appears in the philosophical outlook of the author of Brahma-Siddhi. Primarily concerned that he is with the task of establishing the fundamentals of the unique doctrine, he finds it too early to evolve it in full metaphysical subtleties. This he leaves for his successors, and rightly too. Therefore, though a general absence of direct textual evidence should always make one less dogmatic about it, it would be safer to hold him as the representative of the first phase of Jīvāśrita-avidyā school, viz., the aneka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda. Unshared credit indeed goes to Vācaspati, his great successor, who, instinctively conscious of the inherent inconsistencies of the position of his predecessor, feeling at the same time dissatisfied with the less revolutionary attempts to meet these inconsistencies (characterizable as aneka-jīvāśrita-bhinnāvaraṇa-śaktika-eka-avidyā-vāda), representing the second stage in the evolution of the doctrine, takes a bold step of far-reaching influences, and evolves the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda, representing the third stage in the evolution. The objective and detailed analysis of this major stage having been already gone through in the preceeding chapter, we shall now only try to assess its relative value here. Though not quite perfect and fully comprehensive in itself, the stage, evolved by Vācaspati, nevertheless provides a most vital

1. VPS. 224, 21 to 24.

link in the evolution of the great doctrine to its logical conclusions. Faithful to the relentless forces of logic, it records a sharp advance over the preceeding two stages, takes a boldly revolutionary view of the riddle of finite world, discards for good the foreign influence of Brahmāśrita-eka-avidyā doctrine, that had stuck to it during the preceeding two stages on one hand, and paves the way for the unique eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda, that constitutes the final culmination of the logical forces, vibrating within the speculative Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine on the other. Without the preliminary grounds, prepared by the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda, this culminating phase would not have been conceivable at all. Thus, the aneka-jīva-vāda, as enunciated by Vācaspati, can be safely characterized as a close predecessor of the eka-jīva-vāda of later times. Even the above assertion that the illustrious philosopher necessarily represents the third and penultimate stage in the evolution of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine should not be mistaken for an unconditional statement. The incomplete character of the view of his advaitic outlook, that has been allowed to us by Time, should always make us less dogmatic in our assertion. That such a deep-thinker as Vācaspati, should feel satisfied with mere aneka jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda, which, however revolutionary it might seem to be in comparison with the preceeding stages, is, nevertheless, incompetent to meet all the charges, and that he should not move forward to its logical conclusion, viz., eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda, seems highly unbelievable,. Moreover, the fact that the eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda should have been known in all its subtleties as early as Prakāśātman's times,[1] suggests that its speculative career is not a monopoly of the concluding phases of the latter epoch alone; and it will not be an absolutely unwarrantable assumption to trace it, even directly, back to Vācaspati himself. And, even if stands are to be taken on unimpeachable factual text-evidences alone, the significance of Vācaspati's contribution to the gradual evolution of the

1. PPV. 58, 15.

Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine remains a self-asserted truth, undeniable even by a sceptic.

While historical considerations disclaim the traditional attribution of the origination of the great Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine to Vācaspati, they equally uphold that of the subtle Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda. The detailed study of this highly speculative approach to the problem of empirical reality has made it quite clear to us that it is not only closely related to the Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine, but actually develops out of it, and necessarily forms one facet of its multi-sided personality. The Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda is fundamentally impossible in the philosophical set-up of a Brahmāśrita-avidyā-vādin. While the career of the Jīʌāśritae avidyā-doctrine can be divided into four main stages, that of th- Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda also presents four prominent phases of development. First of them arises in the third stage of evolution of Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine; the second co-develops with the fourth stage, while the third and the fourth (—more popularly taken for the doctrine itself) arise and develop within the self-same ultimate stage of Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine. Therefore, the very attribution of the third phase of the Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine, namely aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda, to Vācaspati, amounts to say that he is the originator of the first phase of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda, and thus the original source of all speculative reasoning, that developed the subtle doctrine into further phases, obtaining within the sphere of the fourth and the last stage of Jīvāśrita-avidyā doctrine. It is true that the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda, as enunciated by him is quite different from that, commonly understood by the tradition as such. To be more clear, those are the last two developments of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda, which deny the empirical world the independent of apprehension and the extra-apprehensional existences, respectively, that are traditionally recognized as Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi doctrine, and not the earlier two, which we have read as developing out of the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda, and the orthodox eka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda. The first phase of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda, forming an organic part of the aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda, as developed by

Vācaspati, is solely concerned with the thesis that since the avidyā, the ultimate transformatory cause of the universe, is not one but many, different with each and every individual soul, the universe, which is really speaking but avidyā itself, evolved into multifarious forms and names, is not one but many, each individual soul, moving into his own universe, conjured up before him by his own avidyā. The Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda of Vācaspati, in other words, propounds that there is no one Sṛṣṭi, presented before many congnizers (Dṛṣṭis) thereof; but each perceiver (Dṛṣṭi) has his own world (Sṛṣṭi). He is not thus concerned with the problem as to how much valid existence ought to be granted to the empirical objects, when separated from the apprehensions thereof,—the problem, with which the last two phases of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda try to deal. In stead of limiting his vision to the empirical objects alone, he tries to explain the order of the two lower realms of being from a much wider stand. The Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi doctrine of Vācaspati, in other words, is but the logical sequence of his aneka-jīvāśrita-aneka-avidyā-vāda. When one thus considers the elementary and the intermediary stages of the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda and the Jīvāśrita-avidyā-vāda, developed and presented by the philosophical outlook of Vācaspati, as inescapable outcomes of the formative age, in which he was called upon to contribute his mite to the evolution of advaitic thought, one takes for natural the inconsistencies, self-contradictions and violations of obvious logical sequences of the stands accepted—, the defects, a few instances of which one has noticed in his outlook, in the previous chapter. In spite of all this, however, the traditional attribution of the subtle Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi doctrine to Vācaspati is perfectly valid and legitimate, in as much as it is due to the unique explanation to the problem of post-liberational existence, which Vācaspati offers, that the refined culmination of eka-jīvāśrita-avidyā-vāda becomes possible, and provides the stand, wherefrom the validity of the empirical world, that is given in perfection, can be reduced to the level of that of the phenomenal one, the only objective that the later two phases of Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi doctrine have in view. Thus, though the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-

vāda, subtly hinted at by Vācaspati as the logical implications of his aneka-avidyā-vāda, cannot be held as the direct ground of the succeeding phases of the Vāda, none can deny its invaluable importance as forming the indispensible preliminary stage, without which the latter would have been hardly possible. And, even if taken by itself, the Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda of Vācaspati is an attempt towards the interpretation of the world of diversity at once original, bold and pregnent with rich potentialities. His unique and bold theory, that propounds, as said above, that every individual soul has his own universe, conjured up before him by his own avidyā, and therefore when a particular individual soul puts an absolute end to the avidyā through the supreme realisation, it is his own universe that is destroyed, while other individual souls go on, labouring under the phenomena of the diversity of being, raised by their own respective avidyās, strikes a fine balance between the orthodox aneka-jīvāśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda on one hand, and the revolutionary eka-jīvaśrita-eka-avidyā-vāda on the other. It provides a vitally necessary intermediary link in the successive evolution of the subtle doctrine of Māyā, along the lines of Jīvāśrita-avidyā school, it also presents an entirely new type of approach to the riddle of finite being, which, in spite of its complex and highly speculative character, deserves a high estimation.

(F) After all has been said for and against, the fact remains that the philosophical out look of Vācaspati, obtaining as it docs at the dawn of the first epoch of post-Śaṅkara evolution of advaitic thought, is remarkable, not for the tendencies and characteristics, inherited from the great predecessors (—which is but natural), not for the full-fledged presentations of the subtle doctrines like Māyā and the allied problems (—which is too much to expect), but, for the appearance of new tendencies and the rise of novel approaches, which, once conceived of, do not die out easily, but, entrusted to worthy successors, gradually grow and flourish, by virtue of their intrinsic merit into full blossom. Such has been the case of almost all great doctrinal contributions. And, Vācaspati's contribution is by no means

an exception to this. The age in which Vācaspati was happily destined to flourish, was of immense significance in the centuries-old career of the advaita Vedānta philosophy. Having emerged out of the vagueness of conception and obscurity of position, which had dominated it during all its pre-Śaṅkara career, the advaitic thought was gradually developing new tendencies and novel characteristics, fraught with far-reaching influences. And, among the great advaitic thinkers, who appeared at this critical juncture and determined the future evolution of the monistic philosophy, the position of Vācaspati is self-prominent. Endowed with a deep philosophical genius, an encyclopaedic acquaintance with each and every branch of Indian philosophy, and an intuitional inclination towards the advaitic solution to the riddle of life, Pandit Vācaspati Miśra rose to the challenge of his age and successfully met the requirements of his times. With a ruthless power of dialectical argumentation at his command, he not only carried on the furious exchanges of hot fire with the rival currents of thought, but, exercising to the full the unique gift of sound originality of conception, he introduced new sub-currents in the slowly evolving advaitic philosophy, which gradually grew up to the distinction of separate schools of thought, with a considerable following of their own. His all-comprehensive philosophical outlook, which reflects quite faithfully and accurately the advaitic explanation of the mystery of life, in its three-fold entirety, transcendental, empirical and phenomenal, win for him a very high position in the shining galaxy of the great advaitins of all times and climes. Though his contribution to the advaitic philosophy is, as we have already seen in details, multi-sided, though a distinct clarification of many a doctrine, such as concerned about the problem of the Sthita-prajña, or about the mutual relation between the action and the knowledge, is traditionally ascribed to Vācaspati Miśra, and with a considerable amount of justice too, his chief and most outstanding contribution necessarily lies in the province of the doctrine of Māyā, the most flexible and controversial advaitic principle, chequered career of which, covering a number of

centuries, we have studied in details. The objective analysis of the salient features of the doctrine of Māyā, in all its phases of evolution, pre-Śaṅkara, Sāṅkara, post-Śaṅkara and pre-Vācaspati as well as post-Vācaspati, reveals to us the exact value and significance of Vācaspati's contribution to this unique aspect of advaitic thought. Destined to flourish in its most formative and impressionable stage of evolution, our illustrious philosopher not only developed the great principle in greater precision and clarity by synthesising the inherited characteristics in an organic unity, but he also freely drew upon his own original powers of philosophical reasoning, and introduced some novel tendencies, which, though fluid and confused in the beginning, gradually acquired the distinctness of individuality, determined the future courses of development of the doctrine as a whole, and were directly responsible for the latter of the two main divisions of post-Śaṅkara advaita philosophy, to wit, Sṛṣṭi-Dṛṣṭi-vāda and Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda. The traditional attribution of the famous Jīvāśrita-avidyā-pakṣa and the subtle Dṛṣṭi-Sṛṣṭi-vāda to Vācaspati, regardless of all historical considerations, is, itself, a significant pointer to the respect with which the advaitins of later times, came to look upon his contribution to the evolution of the great doctrine.

And, the impartial view of his advaitic outlook, either taken by itself or read against the back-ground of the thought-processes proceeding it, or interpreted in the light of its influence over those, succeeding it, more than justifies this attribution and this respect.

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